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Under the Stars and Bars

A History of the Surry Light Artillery

by

B. W. Jones

Recollections of a Private Soldier
in the War Between the States

Benjamin Washington Jones

And Hist'ry's pen will yet relate,
In some approaching, clear-eyed day,
The men *were right* who fought for the State,
And wore the sober, Southern Gray.
—*Reunion Ode.*

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To His Old Comrades, Who Marched with Him Under the Banner of the Southern Confederacy, from the Beginning of the Struggle in Virginia to the Closing Hour at Appomattox, These Recollections, in Garb as Rugged as was the Boy Soldier Himself, are Respectfully and Fraternally Dedicated, by the Author.

PREFACE.

These recollections of events that occurred in Virginia during the great and bloody struggle between the States, in which the writer shared in common with his Company, are collated principally from letters written to a friend at home while the war was progressing.

I have thought it best that the form of the letters be retained, only adding here and there such notes and remarks as appeared to be necessary to make of them one connected story. Having been written as the events were transpiring, they serve admirably as the framework of the narrative, and present a true reflex and picture of the state of affairs as seen by a private soldier during the bitter contest in Virginia leading up from Big Bethel to the abandonment of Richmond.

The book is not meant for general circulation, but only for the boys in gray, my immediate companions in arms, who shared in the events herein related; and for their friends and kindred, who will wish to read the story, and know how those boys stood the test of battle, and endured the ordeal of the daily trials and sufferings to which they were subjected through four long, weary, tragicful years. It is simply an offering of love to the men (the dead and the living alike), with whom I marched and camped, and labored and suffered, in the

effort to turn aside the tidal wave of a ruthless invasion that was sweeping over our land from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, and leaving behind it scarred and desolated homes, and destitution and misery.

It is certain that the men of the Surry Artillery went out to fight for their homes and firesides, for personal liberty, and for the independence and integrity of their State. These were the principles for which we contended. It were these incentives, and not the narrow question of perpetuating negro slavery, that animated the heart of the private soldier of the South, and nerved his arm to strike its heaviest blows in defence of the sacred holdings where his cradle had stood and his ancestors lay buried. They were no hireling soldiery, but freeborn citizens, the native lords of the soil that had been invaded. This tells the secret why the boys in gray, from Texas to Maryland, fought so stubbornly and so persistently.

It has been one purpose in the course of this story, to present something of the inner life of the soldier in camp—something of the many little tableaux and comedies that were often taking place, and which served to break the monotony of what would often have been a dull and scarcely endurable life. Perhaps the recital of these episodes, most of them doubtless long since forgotten by the surviving actors therein, may serve to recall some pleasant memories, and evoke a smile from the now old and gray men, who were then, for the most part, but beardless and care-free boys.

And now, having finished the task, not altogether as I fain would, but as I could, I lay it in the hands of my surviving comrades, trusting that it may serve to call up pleasing, though it must often be sad, reminiscences of that era of unpleasantness that marked our loved Southland with a thousand battlefields, laid therein a million untimely graves, incarnadined her soil with rivers of blood, and filled her homes with widows and orphans, and poverty and loneliness, where love, peace, and plenty should have reigned supreme.

The memory of these things must linger while a single veteran remains to tell the mournful story. And it is right that the sons and daughters should know what the fathers and mothers endured. Over the wrongs that we suffered we may throw the mantle of forgiveness, but we can never forget them. Knowing well that we *were right*, we would fight the foe again, were cause and quarrel and issue the same. The man who would not contend for his own domicile and altar, for the soil of his birthplace and the graves of his ancestors, is a craven.

B. W. J.

Surry, Va., 1909.

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Under the Stars and Bars

A HISTORY OF

THE SURRY LIGHT ARTILLERY

Introductory Notes.

When, early in 1861, the first muttering thunders of war began to reverberate through our land—and when, on the 17th of April, Virginia, finding it impossible to remain neutral, passed her ordinance of secession, and cast in her lot with that of the new-born Southern Confederacy, men everywhere throughout the old State began hastily to organize, equip, and prepare themselves, as best they could, for the impending conflict that was so rapidly approaching. Even then the flame of war had already burst forth in the farther South, Sumter had been bombarded and taken, and the spirit of war prevailed almost everywhere North and South. The determination to resist invasion—the first and most sacred duty of a free people—became general, if not universal. The plodding, conservative farmer forsook the implements of his toil, the mechanic laid aside his tools, the merchant turned away from his traffic, and the fiery young student of law or letters

closed his books, and took up the rifle or the sword; all classes responded to the call for volunteers, and military companies for every branch of the service were speedily enrolled and armed, ready for duty wherever the State might call them. Camps were laid out and barracks constructed, fortifications were built, forges and factories became busy in preparing the implements of war, and all was activity, and bustle, and ardor, to meet the boastful foe who had already crossed our borders.

In all these preparations, the little county of Surry, in common with her sister counties around her, took an early and active part. In nothing was she found laggard or supine. She gave freely of her material and money, and her people, male and female, exerted themselves nobly in mustering and equipping men for the field. Her sons of military age almost en masse hastened to enroll themselves in some new or already existing company. Every man, except a timid nothing here and there, felt it his duty to respond to the call of his State, and of the new Confederacy under which he then lived and acted.

Besides the old Surry Cavalry, an ante-war organization composed of the flower of her wealth and chivalry, to which men began to flock till it was filled to repletion, another large Cavalry company was made up in the county. The Light Artillery, the history of

which is herein related, was enrolled and sent into the field. The Jamestown Heavy Artillery, Captain Harrison's Company, was composed largely of men from Surry. Captain Allen's Infantry of Prince George, had in it quite a number of Surry men. Some joined the Isle of Wight Blues, some enlisted in the Sussex Cavalry, and numbers still went to other commands, as inclination or convenience led them. This statement will account for the fact, that, in proportion to her military strength, so few companies or commands hailed directly from Surry county.

In the enrollment of the Light Artillery—the S. L. A., as I shall often put it, for brevity—James D. Hankins, a young cadet just returned from the military school at Lexington, took an earnest and active part. Early in May, 1861, the embryo company, augumented in numbers by men from the Cabin Point and Spring Grove neighborhoods, where John A. Deal had been laboring to form a company, met at Surry Court House, effected a permanent organization, and elected its commissioned officers. The county court, shortly afterwards, presented the men with new and serviceable uniforms, and the new Company stood ready for active service wherever the State might order it to go.

The following is a list of the men of the new Company, rank and file, as it was originally constituted:

Captain—Thomas W. Ruffin.
First Lieutenant—James D. Hankins

Second Lieutenant—Ira O. Crenshaw.
Third Lieutenant—John A. Deal.
First Sergeant—William R. Barham.
Second Sergeant—Theophilus J. Berryman.
Third Sergeant—T. Bolling Bell.
Fourth Sergeant—Joseph H. Pitman.
Commissary Sergeant—Joel W. Whitley.
First Corporal—John H. Bell.
Second Corporal—Bolling T. Jones.
Third Corporal—Edwin S. Spratley.
Fourth Corporal—Samuel A. Moody.

PRIVATES.

Bailey, James T.
Bell, Edwin R.
Berryman, Joseph R.
Berryman, John R.
Brown, Nicholas A.
Casey, Roger.
Cockes, Littleton M.
Clayton, William A.
Collier, R. M. J.
Davis, John A.
Deuell, James T.
Edwards, William W.
Edwards, W. John.
Foreman, W. W.
Goodrich, Whitfield.
Garon, Joseph.
Gwaltney, Benjamin F.
Harris, John T.
Holleman, Edmund S.
James, William E.
Johnson, Lewis.
Johnson, William S.
Jones, Isaac G.
Jones, Benjamin W.
Judkins, John L.
Judkins, W. B. O.
King, James.
King, Joseph.
Little, William H.
Moody, James W.
Pond, Noah B.
Presson, John W.
Roberts, Henry C.
Rowell, George A.
Rowell, J. Henry.
Rowell, Patrick H.
Rowell, Thomas J.
Savedge, Richard R.
Seward, John L.
Spratley, James N.
Thompson, Robert C.

The Company, as thus constituted, was composed of men, all of whom were residing in Surry in 1861, but a number of them were natives of other places. Lieutenant Crenshaw came from Richmond; Bailey and Holleman were from Southampton county; Casey was

a native of Ireland; Foreman came from Baltimore; Garon was from New Jersey; W. S. Johnson hailed from Connecticut, and B. H. Delk, W. H. Little and J. W. Whitley were natives of Isle of Wight county.

Immediately upon its organization, application was made for guns and equipments. But at that early stage in the life of the Confederacy, there were no guns to be had, and a long delay ensued before any were obtained. However, having been ordered into camp, on the 22d of June, 1861 (a few days after the battle at Big Bethel), we took our departure from Surry Court House for Smithfield, in Isle of Wight. It was on a Saturday afternoon, a bright and balmy day. The Company was halted for the day at Bacon's Castle, and we were quartered in the old Hebron church, where we spent the first night of our soldier life.

Supper was furnished us by the elder John Hankins, Mr. William A. Warren, and other patriotic citizens of the vicinity, and we passed the night in or near the church building, some sleeping out of doors and some upon the benches or the floor. It was a novel experience with us all. But merriment and good humor prevailed; songs, comic or otherwise, dispelled serious thought, as they also prevented sleep on the part of some who had thought to retire early. No one slept much, and the god of dreams doubtless fled appalled from the noisy assemblage.

In fancy I look back over the long and eventful period of forty-eight years that has elapsed since that,

to us, ever memorable time. I see the gay procession as it journeyed on, some in wagons and some in rail-carts or other conveyances—hear the jests and dashes of song that broke now and anon from the care-free boys—see them at supper, in soldier style, helping themselves liberally—see them at night trying to find a soft place on the bare pews of the church, and finally giving it up in disgust—and see, on the morrow morn, the good ladies of the vicinity come out to bid us good-by and wish us safety and a speedy return to our homes! Alas! how very little did any of us then know or realize of the true nature, or probable duration, of the conflict that awaited us, or the self-denials and privations to which we would be subject, in the stern tragedy to which we were hastening! Heaven, in its mercy, veils the future from us, whether our pathway leads through jungles and thorns, or over daisied plains and beds of roses.

On arriving at Smithfield, we were quartered on the grounds of the Mason street church and the Masonic Hall, and the church building was opened for our occupancy by night. Rations were supplied us by the town, and drilling, morning and afternoon, took up a large part of our time by day. In a few days the enrolling officer came along, and we were mustered into the military service of the Confederate States of America, for the term of one year—"unless sooner discharged"! And perhaps some of us were verdant enough to think

that the war would indeed be over, and we would return, with honors and eclat, before the expiration of one year! Our pay, as soldiers of the Confederacy, began from the day we were mustered into service.

Thus the STARS and BARS became our banner. Under its immaculate folds, during four immortal years, a military history was to be written that should eclipse that of any land or any people. In the making of this history, it fell to the lot of the S. L. A. to share but a small and humble part. Yet, as I expect to show in the following pages, we did good service wherever sent, and accomplished something of importance for the cause of the Southern Confederacy.

Though we were not in at Gaines's Mill or Cold Harbor, on the left of the Confederate lines, when the great drama before Richmond began in 1862, we were in at Point of Rocks, on the extreme right of that line, where we held back a Federal fleet of seven gunboats, saved Petersburg from bombardment, and perhaps, from capture; effected the destruction of one of their vessels, and gave the Confederacy a serviceable engine to put upon one of its ironclads. Though we were not present in Spotsylvania, when Lee and Grant were pounding each other to pieces in May, 1864, we were present at Port Walthall, and Fort Stevens, and the second Drewry's Bluff during the same tragicful month, where we helped to turn back Butler's host from its advance on Richmond and to pen them up in

quiet idleness at Bermuda Hundred. Though we did not march with Lee into Maryland, or share in the misfortunes at Gettysburg, we did help to guard and defend the oft-assailed Capital from the sudden forays of the enemy, under Stoneman and Dahlgren and Sheridan.

These things must count for something. And history's pen will yet accord to the smaller portion of Lee's army that guarded the Capital of the Confederacy successfully in '62, '63 and '64, the meed of having performed their part as well as the larger army that foiled the invading hosts at Fredericksburg or Chancellorsville. It is not the number contending, but the issue involved, that makes a battle important. Port Walthall and the second Drewry's Bluff saved the cities of Petersburg and Richmond from capture and the Confederacy from ruin, twelve months before the collapse of the Southern Republic. Let the following pages furnish the proof I have to offer for the statement here advanced. This is not uttered in any braggart tone, but in simple justice to ourselves and the truth of history.

Our short sojourn at Smithfield, comparatively with the remainder of our soldier life, was like a fête day to us. We were fed, and regaled, and noticed by the good people of the town, until we became quite vain of our importance. The evening hours were enlivened by song, in which the ladies sometimes joined from

their verandas or windows—the days were made happy by the visits of friends from home—the duties were light—and rations were plentiful and good. A few weeks passed pleasantly, but too speedily, by, only to linger in memory but never to return—to fade away, like receding songs of happiness, that the great cloud-burst of war soon silenced forever! I recall, even now, with mingled feelings of pleasure and amusement, that first, short, happy month of soldier life at old Smithfield, ere discipline had galled us, and ere we were "broke to the harness" by the rude hand of the drill-master, and we were made to learn the first hard lesson of military duty—that it was ours to obey and do with unquestioning promptness!

In the early part of August, our Company was ordered to join the 3d Regiment of Infantry, then stationed at Camp Cook, on the lower James river. Here we were quartered in tents lately vacated by a Company that had been transferred to another command, and we were ranked as Company I of the Regiment. It was at this place that our real soldier life and experiences began. But we were "under the yoke," and the boys took to their duties kindly, and laughed, and sported, and sang the tardy hours away with great good nature and nonchalance.

From this point onward to the close, I will use the letters written home to a friend during the progress of

the war, only supplementing them with such notes and remarks as may appear necessary, in elucidation and connection of the general record. In every case, the notes and additions are designated by the brackets.

LETTER FIRST.

Company attached to 3d Virginia Infantry—Drilling with the Regiment—Murmurs of the men—Guard duty—Vandalism—Hucksters—Note.

CAMP COOK, VA.,
August 15, 1861.

My Dear Friend:—I did not write to you from Smithfield, as I had promised, because our time there was so constantly occupied with a series of pleasant rounds, and with the oft-recurring drills—drills by squad, drills by section, drills by company. Fresh troops, you may well suppose, need a deal of drilling.

I expected, too, to have been permitted to see you in person ere this time. But we begin already to discover that a private soldier cannot go and come at will, but must secure a "permit," or a "furlough," and travel, like a slave, with a pass in his pocket.

But here we are at Camp Cook, immediately on the lower James river, in open view of Newport News Point, and the Federal fleet lying off there, and near the famous oyster-beds, or shoals, known so well, and valued so highly by our forefathers for generations agone. O course, we expect to enjoy the delectable bivalves, when the season for them opens.

We are now attached, as Company I, to the 3d Virginia Regiment of Infantry, Col. Roger A. Pryor

commanding. Having received no cannon as yet, we have been furnished with muskets, and are required to drill with the Regiment, besides doing infantry drill by company.

Some of the men murmur a good deal at having to perform infantry duty, saying they enlisted for the artillery service. The officers, however, tell them it is only a temporary arrangement, and that the cannon will soon be here for our use. But the men shake their heads, and declare it is only a ruse to lure us piecemeal into the net, and fasten us to the infantry service for the war. I do not know. I begin already to feel attached to the men of the other Companies, many of whom are very clever fellows, and should it so result, I, for one, will not hesitate to go with the Regiment wherever duty calls. It is a fine body of men, ably officered, and full of the *esprit de corps*. I doubt not, when the hour of trial comes, that they will give a good account of themselves.

Besides the constant drilling, we have to do guard duty with the Regiment, both at Camp and down at Day's Point, two miles below us, where there is a picket outpost. Each Company sends two men daily, and the Surry Cavalry, Captain Taylor's Company, supplies a detail of four horsemen, for vedettes.

While on the outpost the other night, I was witness to a scene of vandalism that, they tell me, is of frequent occurrence on the other side of the river. The view

across the river to the country about Big Bethel is unobstructed, and a large fire over there at night is readily seen from this side. Many of the family residences, barns, and other buildings within reach of the Federal army, are being burned, and the owners thus made refugees. Thus our foes adopt this method to cripple and weaken the Southern people. Such vandalism as this is worthy of barbarian hordes, rather than of a civilized people.

There are crowds of hucksters here every day, with vegetables, fruits, chickens, eggs, etc., to sell to the soldiers, and they carry away a deal of money, for they are liberally patronized, although the regular rations furnished us are plentiful and good. But those who have money spend it freely, and melons, fruits, and eggs are consumed in great quantities by the men.

Time passes lightly, and we are getting used to drilling, and guard duty, and life in camp. These cloth houses are fairly good residences, and it is so easy to change them from one place to another. And there is need for so little furniture! or rather there is no room for it! We sleep and sit on the ground, with only some straw under us.

May peace and good health attend you, and hover over all the homes of the land.

Your friend, B.

[The 3d Regiment, as constituted at this time, was composed of companies from the cities of Norfolk,

Portsmouth and Petersburg, and the counties of Norfolk, Nansemond, Southampton, Isle of Wight and Dinwiddie. It was a fine organization, and subsequently performed its full share of active service in the Army of Northern Virginia, from the battle of Williamsburg, May, 1862, to Sailors' Creek, in 1865. In more than a hundred hard-fought battles, it gave freely of its blood and valor to the Southern cause. Its history is linked forever with that of the Army of Northern Virginia, and with the names of the immortal Lee, of Longstreet, and of Pickett.

In regard to the destruction of the private property of the South, alluded to in the above letter, the future historian who may care to know anything of the deep spirit of hate and oppression toward the Southern people, that animated our foes in this war, may here learn how, from the very beginning of the struggle, they carried the torch and flame wherever they went—may learn how mills, barns, fences, princely residences, furniture, books, pictures, statuary, sacred mementoes, were burned; how the owners, oftentimes aged men and women, were forced to forsake their homes, and endure poverty, self-denial, and want in the interior districts. Wherever a Federal band crossed the land, its pathway was marked, like the track of the snail by its slime, by blackened ruins and the ashes of desolation! Can any old Veteran forget these things, or cease to speak of them? It was a sorry way to "whip us back into the Union," as they pretended to be doing.]

LETTER SECOND.

An invasion of measles—Recruits—Two cannon—Sergeant Bloxam and his hard drilling—Soldierly pluck—Note.

CAMP COOK, VA.,
Sept. 20, 1861.

My Dear Friend:—Our Company has had quite a visitation recently in the way of measles, a perfect invasion of it. Almost every man in the Company has had it, myself one of the last to take it—a well-defined case, the doctor said. It has put me off duty for a good long time—21 days, according to the regulations, and I am free from drill and guard duty now.

We are having quite an increase of new men to our ranks, recruits from Surry county, from Isle of Wight, and from other places. Several of them are from the Mill Swamp neighborhood. As a result of these additions, our officers are kept busy drilling the new men, preparatory to Company and Regimental drill. It is a part of the service that a soldier has to learn.

And we have had two old cannons given us, for practice, and the whole Company is being put through a course of artillery tactics, in addition to our other duties. Thus we are doing double duty, as it were, by serving in the regimental duties, and also at the guns.

In the latter case we are under the tuition of Sergeant Bloxam, of the Portsmouth Company, who has seen service in the United States Army, and who drills us with vim and zeal.

The guns are smooth-bore, six-pounders, of ancient manufacture, appearing as if they might have done service in Revolutionary times. In actual service, they could not be very effective, except at short range. Instead of horses, of which we have none as yet, we are required to move the guns about by hand over the field, to front and to rear, en echelon and in line, to sponge and load and fire in mimic warfare, until our arms ache, and we long for rest.

But Bloxam does not rest. He is relentless. He says the Colonel has told him to drill us thoroughly, and he means to do it. In fact, we suspect that Colonel Pryor is at the bottom of it all. He wants us for the infantry service, and thinks to put us out with artillery by this hard drilling. But we do not take well to infantry tactics. We blunder awfully in every parade, and, I believe, have become the common butt of the Regiment, in consequence of our many mistakes.

No doubt, to spectators it must be a little bit amusing to see us at the old guns, moving them around by main force and awkwardness, until there is little but monotony and disgust in it. But the boys will not give in. They insist on being trained as artillerymen, and learning all there is in it. We are born artillerymen—we are!

Come down and see us at the fun. It will please you to see hove plucky the boys are, and will never cry out, "Hold! enough of artillery for us." It will require more than one Bloxam, or one Pryor either, to beat us out of this idea.

Good-by. God be with and bless you all.

Your friend, B.

[In fancy I look back over the fast evanishing years, and behold us all, Sergeant Bloxam in charge, Corporal B. T. Jones at the trail, Whitfield Goodrich holding the post of number 2, James Moody number 3, William Clayton number 4, myself as number 1—see us all as we march and countermarch, load "by detail," and "fire" by word of mouth, and then load and fire again, and so on, and so out, in those far-off autumn days, in that school of stern discipline by the James. What a time we had! What lessons we learned! What old Veteran does not recall the hard training of his early camp life, often under the command of men who were but little better than pig-headed martinets, regarding the private soldier as but a piece of putty, to be shaped into any form that might please them. However, not overmuch of this fell to our lot, and perhaps we had no great reason to complain of our early training masters. At any rate, we stuck to those two old guns, sorry as they were. They served to drill with as good as the best, and we subsequently came to prize them more highly.

Dear Whitfield! the comrade mentioned in the letter above. A kind, gentle, good-hearted man. He tarried with us but a few short months. He died during the winter, the first of our Company to give his life a sacrifice to the cause of the South. He fell a prey to pneumonia at Camp Pemberton, March 10, 1862. His remains, attended by an escort from the Company, were sent home for interment.]

"And o'er the graves of comrades gone
Our hearts will turn to weep,
And round their names the ivy wreath
Of living green we'll keep."

LETTER THIRD.

Winter quarters—Two more guns—Life in camp—Gambling—Note.

CAMP PEMBERTON, VA.,
Dec. 10, 1861.

My Dear Friend:—We, that is the whole Regiment, are in winter quarters now, good and comfortable log cabins, built by the men, the several Companies each by itself, all arranged around three sides of a large square, or campus, the quarters of the Regimental officers occupying the fourth side. In the open space within, which has been cleared of all debris, the Regimental and Company roll-calls take place, and squad drills of new recruits are conducted. Here we expect to remain through the winter. The new camp is but a short distance from the old one, and there is plenty of wood for fires nearby.

And we have received two more cannon, and horses enough for the four guns. The men are divided now into two classes, cannoneers and drivers, the latter having charge of the horses, and the cannoneers working the guns. We regard ourselves as on rising ground now, and have been excused from infantry drill altogether, of which favor we are immensely proud. And, thanks to the untiring efforts of Sergeant Bloxam, we

are becoming quite expert in the artillery tactics, so that our own officers will drill us in future.

We drill twice daily in battery, and have recently done some sure enough practice at loading and firing. The Colonel wanted to see if our gunners could hit the broad side of a house, about half a mile off, and bantered the gunners beforehand, that, "he would be bound every one of them would miss it, clear and clean." But no. Four big holes were soon made in the side of that edifice. And if the owner ever received any compensation for the damage done, Colonel Pryor had it to pay. He said the gunners did better than he expected of them.

I have not told you much of the inner scenes of camp life, the life of the soldier when off duty. Well, the men get up all sorts of sports—ball, marbles, leaping, running, etc., etc. Anything serves to break the monotony of confinement. The more intellectual of the men spend much time in reading. And the few religious ones get together and sing a good deal. There are quite a number here who have good voices, and the twilight hour, and early darkness before taps, is generally enlivened with song.

But I must say that many, too many, of this Company, both privates and officers, seem to prefer other amusements of a less intellectual or spiritual nature. Card-playing is fearfully common, and the men gamble for money, too. Gambling debts are eating up the

men's wages, instead of going for better things, or for their families at home. It is a great evil, and ought to be forbidden. The morals, as well as the comfort and welfare of the men demand it. Yet I am glad to say we have in our Company some good, pious and God-fearing men, who take no part in encouraging the gambling evil; and these, I trust, like the lump of leaven in the general mass, will exert a salutary and saving influence over the others.

General Huger, who has command on this side of the James, with headquarters at Norfolk, has been around recently on a tour of inspection, and has paid a visit to the 3d Regiment. He is from South Carolina, a scion of an old Huguenot family, and, of course, of French descent. He does not look a bit like a "fire-eater," as the South Carolinians are supposed to be, but a staid, even-tempered, kindly man. I like him. The name is pronounced Hu-gee.

There is an absolute dearth of news from the military field, and I close with a prayer for your continued peace and safety.

Your friend, B.

[The first winter of the S. L. A. in camp passed quietly by. Nothing beyond the common routine of duties occurred to vary the usual sameness. We were very comfortably fixed, rations continued good and

plentiful, there was little sickness, the Company was fairly well drilled by this time, and the moral tone of the organization, and good feeling for each other among the men generally, were excellent.

The following recruits had joined us during the summer and fall of 1861, thus, in addition to the 54 men of the original Company, making our number at the close of 1861 to be 77, rank and file: John W. Barlow and Josiah Bell, from Isle of Wight county; J. Thomas Brown, A. Nicholas Brown, J. Decatur Edwards, and James Gay, from Surry county; Josiah Gwaltney, from Isle of Wight; Joseph Glover, George M. Hargrave, Zechariah Holland, and Joseph R. Kea, from Surry; Luther J. Little, from Isle of Wight; Samuel A. Moody, George W. Moody, William R. Mathews, Richard Moring, John T. Nelms, Joseph T. Price, Charles A. Price, Gilbert W. Rogers, and John Underwood, from Surry; and Servetus M. Williams and Edward W. Wright, also from Surry county. Total, 23.]

LETTER FOURTH.

A mild winter—Life in camp—Active operations expected—Other troops—A soldier's burial—Rations—Note.

CAMP PEMBERTON, VA.,
February 10, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—The winter, which, as you know, has been a mild one, with but little of snow, has passed by without anything occurring to disturb the ordinary routine of camp life. There has been very little sickness among our men, but more, perhaps, among the other Companies of the Regiment, and the daily drills with our guns are more of a pleasure than a task with us now. The guard duty is reasonably light, though the requirements are strict, and there are seldom any burdensome details for forage or wood. The pious members of the Company, and any others who admire vocal music, assemble nightly for singing, and angry brawls among the men are of rare occurrence. The entire Regiment seems composed mainly of moral and orderly men. Though we have no chaplain, and no place of preaching nearby, the men read the Bible among themselves, and sometimes hold social prayer together. The religious and moral spirit of this command is regarded as excellent.

But matters seem shaping themselves for active operations, and the spring campaign is expected to open early. The armies on the Peninsula are astir, though it is yet winter, and fighting may occur at some point very soon. On this side of the James, troops are being concentrated all the way from Smithfield to Suffolk, and it is rumored that fighting has commenced in North Carolina about Roanoke Island. The Blues (Isle of Wight) yet occupy Fort Boykin on the James, where they have been all the winter; and there are forces at Harding's Bluff and numerous other fortified points along the James, both above and below Fort Boykin—Red Point, Pig Point, Barret's Point, and various other "points" and places—where we are said to have heavy guns and resolute men, ready to drive back the invader, whenever he ventures to come, though with all of the panoply of war he be guarded and defended.

Our camp has lately been the scene of a soldier's burial. A new Company (Captain Tutt's) that came here the latter part of the summer from Halifax county, having lost one of its men by sickness, the remains were interred in military style near the camp. A detachment of the Company followed the pall-bearers with reversed arms, the regimental music played the funeral march, and, after the grave was filled, the detachment discharged their guns over the mound, and then turned away and left the early-fallen soldier to his rest. It was a solemn and affecting scene.

Rations continue plentiful and good—flour, bacon or beef, sugar, coffee, and sometimes rice. Nearly every mess of eight or ten men has a negro man for cook. Coffee is made in large camp kettles holding several gallons, and it would astonish you to see what quantities of it the men drink. Strong coffee, liberally sweetened, is the favorite beverage here, and it goes well and does good when one is just off guard duty these cold mornings. I will not say it is the only beverage drank here, for there is a sutler's shop here, where cider and beer are sold, and the men get frequent "permits" to visit Smithfield, four miles from our camp.

Read Numbers 6: 24—27, and think of,

Your friend, B.

[The allusion to beverages, at the close of this letter, reminds me to say, that the restrictions on the sale of intoxicants in the town of Smithfield and the country around, were not as rigid during those times, as, perhaps, they should have been, considering the large bodies of soldiers stationed at different points nearby. Brandy was frequently brought into the camp. As a consequence of this liberty, a good many men found themselves at times doing double duty, or maybe undergoing some sterner punishment for breech of military order—some of the S. L. A. among the rest. Yet, as a rule, our Company passed this ordeal creditably. Composed of some of the best material, morally, of the respective neighborhoods from which they sprang, the

men of the S. L. A. were never much addicted to the vice of drinking. In large part, they were the pious sons of pious and God-fearing men, and their conduct served to check dissipation and disorder among the rest.]

LETTER FIFTH.

The campaign opened—Confederate reverses—Naval battle in Hampton Roads—Departure of the 3d Regiment, and other forces—Camp "Destruction"—Transfers—On the march—Note.

BEN'S CHURCH, VA.,
May 2, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—As was expected when I last wrote to you, the military campaign of 1862 has started early, not only here in Virginia, but at the West also, where our forces have sustained some severe reverses in Kentucky, and at Forts Henry and Donelson, both of which places have been captured by the enemy. In Carolina, also, on February 8th, the Federals succeeded in taking Roanoke Island, with the supplies and garrison there, thus opening the way for an attack upon Suffolk and Norfolk from that direction.

To offset these reverses, we have the brilliant naval victory in Hampton Roads to cheer us. On March 8th, our new ironclad, the Merrimac, that had been quietly under construction all of last summer, dashed out from Norfolk toward Newport News, attacked the Federal fleet lying off there, destroyed two of their boats in quick succession, and created great commotion in the Federal Army near the scene. The fight was renewed the next day between the Merrimac and the Monitor,

also an iron-plated vessel, and the strongest, it is said, in the Federal navy. The extent of the damage on either side is not yet known with us here.

The 3d Regiment has gone across the river, taking the Blues from Fort Boykin, thus leaving those works entirely unoccupied for the time being. Our army on the Peninsula is concentrating near Williamsburg, and Gen. Joseph E. Johnston has assumed command. Most of the infantry forces on this side have also been withdrawn, and a battle is expected over there soon.

Our Company broke camp nearly a month ago, and went first into a "camp of instruction," so designated, but the boys dubbed it "camp destruction," on account of the cold and wet weather and miserable time that we had. Our men suffered greatly, after being so comfortably fixed all winter, and a good deal of sickness has resulted from it.

It was while we were deepest in the mud at the aforesaid camp, down at Riddick's farm, near Suffolk, that several of our men received their transfers, which they had been looking for anxiously for sometime, and six of them have left us to join the Surry Cavalry. It is needless to say that the said men were highly elated at the event, and they thought they had the laugh on the rest of us. But we told them to wait and see. Sometimes "he laughs best who laughs last," and it may result this way in this case. The names of these boys were William A. Clayton, G. A. Rowell, B. T. Jones,

E. S. Spratley, R. C. Thompson, E. R. Bell; all good and efficient men, which our Company can ill afford to lose.

From the mud near Suffolk, we were ordered first, to Barret's Point, which had been vacated by its former garrison, and which appeared to us a most excellent place to be captured in. Fortunately, no doubt, we were soon withdrawn from that trap, and we are now at the winter quarters lately occupied by the Southampton Cavalry, near Ben's Church, and also near the old Colonial church, known as St. Luke's, now in ruins, Our stay here will be brief, and I cannot surmise from what place I may address you next time.

Before I close, let me tell you of the sudden death of one of the men, Thomas J. Rowell, whom you knew. Tom was apparently well only the day before, was cheerful and talkative, and no one thought that death was so near him. But on the next morning he was stricken with something like a congestive chill, and died before noon. His remains were sent home under charge of a detachment from the Company. Thus we have lost two men by sickness within a very few weeks. Others of the Company are sick in hospital, or at home.

Peace be with you, and health and safety.

Your friend, B.

[All the men named above as having procured transfers, served efficiently in the 13th Virginia Cavalry,

General Fitz Lee's command, and all lived to reach home again at the close of the war. They saw a good deal of hard service and fighting, and those of them who are yet living could tell many interesting stories of their adventures and escapes. Clayton served usefully for a time as scout, a difficult and dangerous duty. He received a severe wound, from which he never fully recovered, and died a year or two after the close of the war. Spratley was shot through the body, but recovered, and is still living (1909) at Surry Courthouse. The other four of the men, I believe, escaped without wounds, and returned to become useful citizens. Of these, E. R. Bell died at his home in Isle of Wight, in December, 1905. B. T. Jones died at his home in Surry, February 9, 1908; Thompson and Rowell are yet living, the last having been, for a long time, a great sufferer from paralysis. George A. Rowell died at his home in Surry, May 20, 1909, while the book was passing through the press.]

LETTER SIXTH.

Destruction of the Merrimac—Advance of a Federal fleet—Engagement at Harding's Bluff—Re-election of officers—Postscript—Note.

TODD'S BATTERY, VA.,
May 14, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—At an early hour on the morning of the 10th, a loud explosion in the direction of Norfolk startled us in our quarters at this place, and we have since learned that it was caused by the blowing up and destruction of our famous warboat, the Merrimac, or Virginia, as it was named. It seems that the boat sustained serious damage in the encounter with the Monitor, and its draft being too great for it to be taken far up the James, it was deemed the proper thing to destroy it, to prevent its falling into the enemy's hands. This is sad news. How the foe will rejoice! I suppose they will take the hint, and soon build plenty more like it.

We are now at Todd's Battery, a small entrenchment near the mouth of Smithfield, or Pagan, creek. A fleet of seven or eight Federal gunboats has just now passed us, on its way up the river. It did not notice us here, but saluted Fort Boykin with a shell or two. As there were only a few militia at the place, the resistance was feeble, and the fleet passed on, and turned

its attention to Harding's Bluff, at the upper angle of the Bay. The men there made a stout resistance, holding their fire pluckily for more than an hour, but with what result I have not learned.

And so the war-guns are echoing near us often now. A sharp battle was fought near Williamsburg on the 5th instant, where the 3d Regiment lost its first blood, fortunately with few casualties. We are in daily expectation of the arrival of gunboats, in the attempt to capture Smithfield. This is a weak place, but if they come we will give them the best we have, and make them welcome to it.

We are in daily expectation of orders to retire from this place, and the impression among our men is, that Norfolk and the whole Southside country is being abandoned by our forces, and will soon be left to the tender mercies of a vandal foe. What will become of our homes, and the women and children, when that occurs?

Our Company has just held an election of officers, or rather a re-election. The same officers as before were retained without change, except that Orderly Sergeant W. R. Barham was chosen 3d Lieutenant, in place of John A. Deal, who declined a re-election. It is his purpose to transfer to the cavalry branch of service. He has been a good officer, and is much esteemed. In consequence of the vacancy in the office of 1st Ser-

geant, our 2d Sergeant, T. J. Berryman, has been advanced to the first place, and Noah B. Pond appointed to the vacancy thus created.

May the God of armies defend and keep you all, now and always.

Your friend, B.

Postscript.—I have heard, since the above part of my letter was written, that our friends, the militia, over at Fort Boykin on the 14th, made a beautiful retrograde movement from the place, as soon as the Galena threw them her first shell. Poor fellows! They knew nothing about the working of those big guns. What were they to do? No one could have expected them to put up a fight, under such circumstances.

B.

[The S. L. A. did not tarry long at Todd's Battery. The few forces yet remaining on the Southside having been placed under the command of Col. R. F. Archer, with instructions to proceed leisurely toward Petersburg, the magazine at Fort Boykin was fired and blown up, Sergeant Noah B. Pond, of our Company, performing the difficult and dangerous task; the military stores remaining in Smithfield were burned or distributed to the people; and then, with sad hearts, we bid them adieu, and left them and their homes without protection from the invader. At the time we questioned

the necessity of the movement and gladly we would have staid, to shield the women and children from the insults of the foe. But it was our duty to obey orders, and we retired.

We proceeded first to Ivor, from which place a detachment was sent down, and an attempt made, to destroy the railroad bridge across the Blackwater near Zuni, but with poor success—and then, after tarrying a night at Spring Hill church, in Sussex county, we marched by easy stages to Petersburg, where we made a brief stay. In a few days our Company was ordered into Chesterfield, where General Holmes, with a few forces, was holding the extreme right of the Confederate line confronting McClellan below Richmond.]

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LETTER SEVENTH.

In Chesterfield—The 2d Section goes to Richmond—Camping around—Point of Rocks—Battle of Seven Pines—All quiet on the burly Appomattox—Note.

POINT OF ROCKS, VA.,
June 4, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—Well, here we are, that is to say, half of the Company is here. The 2d Section, including two guns and half of the men, in charge of Lieut. Hankins, has gone on to Richmond. The detail is only temporary, I suppose, and they are expected to return soon.

After our march up here from Smithfield, we made a brief stay in Petersburg, camping in a pine grove in the western confines of the town, and then came over into Chesterfield county, where we have been moving around from place to place for some time. At the present writing, we occupy a place on the Appomattox river, six miles below Petersburg, at the point where Swift Creek flows into that river. It is a high and rocky bluff, rising up and overshadowing the main channel of the river, which, at this place, lies very near the shore. The position is naturally a very strong one, and it is an admirable place for erecting works that would be adequate to the defence of this river and the safety of Petersburg from all naval attack. Properly

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fortified, it would be for the Appomattox what Drewry's Bluff has so lately become for the James—a defence against which no warships of the present day could cope successfully.

But there is nothing here in the line of defences. Not a spadeful of dirt has been turned for earthworks or redoubt, and I doubt if any are ever constructed here. The great preparations now going on before Richmond will prevent any thought or notice of this place, although it lies naturally along the same line of defences as those of the James river.

We are supposed to be here to dispute the advance of Federal vessels up the Appomattox, but, if this be the purpose, we ought to be supplied with far better guns than these we have at present. Our little six-pounders are entirely unfit to cope with the large and powerful guns, such as the vessels of the Federal navy carry at this day. It is but sacrificing men to require them to stand by such guns as ours, and fight against such odds. But, perhaps, our Government is unable, at present, to do any better for us, and we will have to stand to our post, and trust to luck.

A great battle was fought at Seven Pines, on the east of Richmond, June 1st. The half of our Company over there was near the battlefield, but was not engaged. I hear that General Johnston was severely wounded, and that General Robert E. Lee has been placed in command of our army. McClellan is said to have an immense host over there, and the resources of our Government

will be put to a severe test. You may expect to hear of stirring events shortly. Two great armies in such close proximity cannot remain idle long. We do not know how soon we may be called upon to meet an advancing foe.

At this time, however, all is as quiet as a June day Sabbath along the Appomattox. No turmoil of war is disturbing us now. Though we occupy a post on the extreme right of the Confederate lines, confronting Richmond, we are too far from the main portion of both armies to fall much into the commotion of the contending forces. General Holmes, under whose command we are now acting, holds only a very thin and broken line of forces, extending from this place to Drewry's Bluff on the James. Unless McClellan should think to send gunboats up this river to shell Petersburg—an entirely feasible project at this moment—we are not likely to have much to do, so long as we remain here. But in the event that gunboats *should* come this way, there is no telling what would be the fate of the few smooth-faced Surry boys, who are, just now, laughing and taking their ease under the cool shade of the several fine white oak trees that crown this beautiful bluff.

May heaven keep you all in old Surry ever safe from invasion, and lawless freebooters.

Your friend, B.

[In the light of events that transpired soon after the above letter was penned, there is no question about it

but that a grave mistake was made, in not fortifying the Point of Rocks, on the Appomattox, the same as was done at Drewry's Bluff, on the James. The place could have been, and should have been, made too strong for the passage of any war craft up the river. The enemy did attempt to pass up the stream, for the purpose of shelling and destroying the city, and it was only by a piece of fortunate and unexpected good luck on our part, that they were foiled. With heavy guns and resolute men on that rock-crowned hill, no vessels of that day, even though encased with iron or steel, could have forced the passage—and the fleet that did venture there on the night of June 26th, would have been sunk or disabled.]

LETTER EIGHTH.

A contest with gunboats—Results of the fight—The enemy's losses—The seven days' battles—Note.

POINT OF ROCKS, VA.,
June 28, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—I hasten to inform you that the Light Artillery boys have had their baptism of fire, a battle royal, and that with Federal gunboats! And so what was regarded as hardly probable has come to pass. A fleet did come this way, though no one seemed to think it would, and as it came and we were here, we fought it to the best of our ability—fought it with only our two smooth-bore, six-pounder guns, and a small infantry support.

On June 26th, McClellan and Lee began their great test of skill and arms before Richmond, and on the night of that same day, just as we were having roll call, and the men were about to retire for the night, the boom of a cannon a little way down the river, and the whizzing of a shell as it sped by us, aroused us to the fact that the enemy was approaching. Soon another shell followed the first, and then several more to the right and the left of the river, as if the enemy were feeling their way, and trying to locate or uncover any hostile force.

And now we knew that there was work for us to do. Despite our small number of men—some sixty only,

one-half of the Company being away—and notwithstanding the great disparity in the weight and effectiveness of our guns, there was no thought of anything but doing the best we could, and disputing the advance of the fleet as long as we might.

The cannoneers sprang to their guns, and while the Captain was giving some necessary orders concerning the horses, the men stood waiting for orders to fire. By this time the foremost of the vessels had come up very near to us, and lay just below the bluff, not fifty yards from our position on the top of it. The discharge of our guns brought the fleet to a halt, and then the battle began in earnest. But as the darkness of the night prevented the enemy from getting the range and elevation properly, most of their shells passed high over us, and exploded far to the rear, without doing us any harm.

We fired upon the nearest of the boats as fast as we could load, and could hear the impact of our shells as they struck on the iron armor of the vessels. Of course, we were not doing the enemy much material harm at that, but we were keeping him busy, trying to dislodge us from our vantage ground on the bluff.

In the meantime, an infantry support had come to our aid—two companies commanded by Lieutenant J. T. West—and these men found excellent shelter behind the large boulders of granite on the sides of the bluff. As often as the port-holes of the boats were opened, the infantry poured in upon the gunners a perfect fusillade of minnie balls, that galled them most

severely, and did great execution among them. Being at such close range, every shot almost did some injury, while the infantry were completely sheltered by the masses of rock that lie all around, on either side of the Point.

Being stung almost to desperation by the fire of the infantry into their portholes, and maddened by their inability to lodge an effective shot on the top of the bluff, where our guns were placed, the enemy seemed now to double their efforts to destroy us, and the roar of their guns and the bursting of their shells became terrific and deafening. But for our elevated position, and their near approach to us, they would doubtless have pounded every man of us into mincemeat. If they elevated their guns enough to miss the edge of the rock, their balls passed over, and did no injury. They were only wasting their amunition, and were doing us no hurt.

Thus the fight went on for more than two hours. The boats did not slacken their fire, and the boys continued to pepper their iron sides as fast as they could load. After awhile, one of the boats lower down the river got the range better, and then several of their huge shells exploded very near us. One of these, bursting near a group of our men, wounded several of them, two of them quite seriously. Our 2d Lieutenant, I. O. Crenshaw, was dangerously wounded about the hip, and W. John Edwards, a private, was also painfully hurt by a piece of the same shell. Two others were slightly hurt.

In the course of the engagement, a lucky shot from one of our guns, entered the porthole of one of the vessels, and plunging downward, made a leak in the hull, that obliged them to run the craft aground, to prevent it from sinking in deep water. This boat, after taking off the valuables, they have now burned and abandoned.

Thus, if we did no more, we have been instrumental in checking the advance of the fleet upon the city of Petersburg, and have caused the destruction of one of their warships, besides the killing or wounding (as we have since learned) of fifty of their men. Our loss was five men wounded, two of them seriously. It is thought that Lieutenant Crenshaw is dangerously hurt. The wounded men were sent on to hospital the same night.

The Petersburg *Express* of the 27th contains a glowing account of the affair, but beyond that no notice has been taken of it. The great struggle at Richmond that began on the same day, and which is yet going on, absorbs the whole attention of the country, and of the world.

We are now camping in the vicinity of Port Walthall on Swift Creek, two miles from Point of Rocks. The gunboats have returned down the river, and some of the boys have gone over in a boat, to take a look at the remains of the vessel that was burned. Heavy musketry firing has been echoing all the morning from the country east of Richmond. It is a contest of giants, and the final result still hangs in the balance, concealed from all eyes but God's.

Thankful to Almighty God that so many of us have escaped unharmed in the midst of so much danger, and with a prayer for the continued safety of our friends at home, I remain,

Your friend, B.

[This, the first engagement in which the Surry Artillery took part in the war between the States, while it attracted no notice from the public press at the time, because of the great drama that was at the same moment being enacted, day after day, for more than a week, before Richmond, was not devoid of important results and benefits to the Confederacy. In the first place, it gave the boys of the S. L. A. confidence in themselves, and their ability to make a good fight under any ordinary or reasonable conditions. They knew that the circumstances under which they fought on this occasion were unique. They felt that it should not have been expected of them, with only two light field pieces, to stand and contend against the heavy cannon of seven Federal gunboats. Against infantry in the field, or cavalry, they believed they could have done much better. Or with heavier and more effective guns to work, they had no doubt but that they might have inflicted more damage on the vessels.

Besides, the affair had tested their fighting qualities, and none of them had shown the white feather. All had stood to their posts like Trojan heroes, and had fought until ordered to retire and rendezvous at another place.

Secondly, the result showed the value of an infantry support, when engaged against gunboats on all narrow waters. It was to the infantry, doubtless, that we owed the whole loss of the enemy in killed and wounded. And this was considerable.

Thirdly, it is highly probable that we saved Petersburg from bombardment, and perhaps from a destructive fire, and it is certain that we caused the destruction of one of the enemy's vessels, and that we gave the Confederacy a serviceable engine, to put upon an ironclad. The engine of the burned vessel was subsequently raised, carried to Richmond, and placed on one of the boats built by the Confederacy.

Thus the foe lost a gunboat and a considerable number of men, and accomplished nothing. We lost no material, and gained in military spirit and confidence.]

LETTER NINTH.

Return of the 2d Section—End of the seven days' struggle—McClellan stationary—Balloons—Death of I. O. Crenshaw—Note.

WALTHALL JUNCTION, VA.,
July 15, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—The 2d Section of our battery, that has been separated from the other half of the Company, has returned. It reached this vicinity on the evening of our gunboat fight—June 26th—but was not near enough to render us any aid on that occasion. Of course, the boys of the two sections have a great deal to tell each other of their experiences, since we parted several weeks ago.

The great contest of arms between Lee and McClellan, after continuing a week, has ceased. After many hard and bloody battles, from Mechanicsville to Malvern Hill, General Lee succeeded in rolling back McClellan's vast host of 120,000 men, and the Federal Army is now quietly reposing, and resting, at Berkley on the James. Though he is said to still have around him an army greater in number than General Lee's, yet he finds it convenient to throw away all that he had gained in his advance upon Richmond, and to acknowledge his defeat by retiring under the cover of his great fleet of gunboats in the James.

The great army of invaders, that began their march up the Peninsula two months ago, and whose pathway from Big Bethel to Mechanicsville has been swept by fire and desolation, appears to be quiet and well-behaved enough now. They have felt the weight of the Southern arm when striking for home and family, and doubtless are aware, by this time, that they cannot walk over the land, as they would over a conquered province, and continue to burn and destroy at will. Apart from sending up a few balloons, with men and glasses to spy out the location of our forces, or the weak points in our defences, the Federals appear to be doing nothing to break the usual monotony of life in camp. I have observed two or three balloons recently, resting stationary high in air, while, doubtless, the occupants were "taking note" of all they could discover in the country from the Appomattox to the Chickahominy. The Federals are welcome to all they can learn in this way, in such a wooded country.

Since I wrote you on June 28th, 2d Lieutenant I. O. Crenshaw has died of his wounds. As I then stated, he was dangerously wounded in the fight at Point of Rocks, and, despite the best attention of the medical staff, and of his friends from Richmond, the hurt proved to be a fatal one. He is dead. He had been a good and efficient officer, and was much esteemed by the men. The Confederacy has lost a worthy and valuable citizen and soldier.

We are now in our cloth tents near Walthall Junction, on the P. & R. railway. All is quiet around us at present, despite the proximity of such a great army and fleet, whose flag is not the Stars and Bars. But we hear that the Federals are retiring on transports down the river, to be sent on to some other field of battle and blood, in this or another State.

We have a large sick list now for so small a Company, the most of them in hospital in Petersburg. There have been several cases of the measles this summer, and dysentery prevails among the men.

May your guardian angel shield you.

Your friend, B.

[The spring and earlier summer months of 1862 proved to be a sickly period for the S. L. A., and many of the cases resulted fatally. Among the deaths about this time, I recall the names of the following, and am not sure that this list includes all that died during that season:

John W. Edwards, from Moore's Swamp, who had joined us only in the early part of that year; Josiah Bell, from Mill Swamp, who came in the latter part of '61; Robert and Emmet Collier, brothers, from Surry, new recruits; Anson Goodrich, another new man, but a few months with us; and Richard Moring, who died at our camp, near Walthall Junction, in July, 1862, and whose remains were interred nearby, in a field over-

grown with small pines. The others died in Petersburg, and were buried in the Soldiers' burying-place near there. The remains of some of them were afterwards carried home for re-interment. All these died early, a prey to disease, giving their young lives a sacrifice to freedom's cause and Southern rights. Though they fell not in battle, their record is honorable and without a stain. Let us keep their memories green.

"Here plant the ivy and the pine,
And let the myrtle spring—
And 'round these names the wreath entwine
Of everlasting green."

"They fell in a cause, tho' lost, still just,
And died for me and you."

Holcombe.]

LETTER TENTH.

Shelling a gunboat—Results—Discharge of 35-year men—Lee in Northern Virginia—A comet—Election for 3d Lieutenant—Autumn—Note.

WALTHALL JUNCTION, VA.,
August 5, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—On Sunday afternoon, August 3d, our battery was ordered to proceed at once to a point near Bermuda Hundred, for the purpose of shelling a gunboat that had grounded in the James river near that place. We reached the designated point, put our guns in position, and began firing upon the stranded vessel. About the same time, another battery on the southern side of the Appomattox joined in the shelling, and thus we had the boat between two fires.

Our shots reached and struck the boat, inflicting some damage, no doubt. But the vessel was too far away for our small guns, and we probably did it but little harm. We soon discovered there was no chance for us to sink the craft, and the fire of the battery on the other side of the river appeared to be doing no more execution than our own. Both of us were firing at very long range for such small calibre guns.

But if the Federals were grounded, they were not helpless, and as their vessel lay broadside to us, they brought several guns into action, and soon returned our

fire with vigor. They quickly sent over the water toward us some pretty big playthings, some of which burst near us, but the most of them went whizzing and screaming by, far to the rear. A few of their huge "lamp-posts," as the boys called them, struck the ground some distance in front of the guns, and ricochetting beautifully, passed over in grand style without exploding.

We kept up the game with them more than an hour. But as we saw the ironclad Galena coming with all speed to the aid of her consort, and as it was plain that we were doing her no material damage, the officer in charge of us—a Captain Taylor, I believe, of General Holmes' staff—directed us to withdraw. We came off with only the loss of one horse, killed by a piece of a shell, and one man, Corporal R. R. Savedge, slightly wounded in the knee.

In obedience to an order received from headquarters in Richmond, whereby all men in the army who are more than 35 years old, were to be discharged, and permitted to return to their homes, a dozen or more of our men have lately bid us adieu and retired from the service. They were:

J. Nicholas Bell (butler), J. Thomas Brown (the fiddler), Nicholas A. Brown, Roger Casey, James R. Hatchell, William W. Edwards, James Gay, Randolph Johnson, John R. Kea, James King, William H. Little, John W. Presson, and James N. Spratley.

We learn here, though it is not in the papers, that Lee's army—the main part of it, at least—is now in Northern Virginia, and that a General Pope has superseded General McClellan in command of the Northern Army. The great army of McClellan in these parts has been withdrawn, and with it most of the fleet. It is certain very little of their fleet was in sight about City Point on the afternoon of the 3d.

A large comet is visible now in the northwestern sky, and is getting nearer and plainer to view every evening. Its shape is much like that of the Turkish cimeter. What it may portend, if anything, no one, perhaps, knows.

In consequence of the death of 2d Lieutenant I. O. Crenshaw, Lieutenant W. R. Barham has been advanced to the vacancy, and an election has been held to fill the vacancy in the third place. The contest lay between J. W. Whitley, Commissary Sergeant, and Orderly Sergeant T. J. Berryman, and resulted in Whitley's election. Milton H. Gray was, thereupon, appointed to the post of Commissary Sergeant. Gray came to us early in 1862, from the vicinity of Mill Swamp. He had been sutler at Camp Cook in 1861.

Brown-hued autumn is here again, and the now quiet and solemn woods of old Chesterfield are beginning to wear their many-colored robes of yellow and dun, and

bronze and red, telling us that the reign of summer is over, and another winter is fast approaching. Not the sound of a gun is heard. Even the gunboats that patrol the James seem to have omitted their usual morning salute for the time being. We are reposing at ease. Rations are enough, but not as plentiful as a year ago. The boys forage for wild grapes (of which there are a good many near here this fall), and apples, and buttermilk, and so they sing their songs, and contrive to "while away the time" without getting into that miserable state denominated "the blues."

All is quiet in the vicinity of the two cities, and we are falling back into the easy ways of life in camp, until called forward again to more active duties in another field.

Grace and mercy be with you all.

Your friend, B.

[Of the 35-year men noted in this letter as having been discharged from service, only two subsequently returned to the army. J. T. Brown afterwards re-enlisted in the S. L. A., and continued to perform his duties until near the end of the war, when he died of small-pox. His death took place at the small-pox hospital in Richmond, in the latter part of the summer of 1864. His remains were buried in Oakwood, the Confederate cemetery, near the eastern limits of the city.

W. H. Little also re-enlisted. He joined Company H, 13th Virginia Cavalry, where he remained till the

close of the war. Since the war, returning to his native county (Isle of Wight), he has twice married, and has been a prosperous farmer. He is still living (1909).

None of the other men ever returned to the army. J. W. Presson died at his home in Surry, in 1863. All of the others named died within a few years after the end of the struggle. Hatchell was, I believe, the last survivor of the thirteen, except W. H. Little, who is yet living.

About the time the above letter was penned, Lee's army, in its advance into Northern Virginia, had fought the great battles of Cedar Run and the Second Manassas, and having "pushed Pope out of the saddle," to be succeeded by McClellan, who was again put at the head of affairs, were advancing into Maryland. In consequence of these movements, a few months' interregnum of unusual quiet and peace prevailed around the Confederate Capital, and the country along the lower James, and in all Southern Virginia. The storm-centre of war had shifted from the James to the Potomac, and the Light Artillery was permitted to enjoy a few weeks' repose, ere the winter set in, and they were moved forward to other quarters. Visits from friends at home, or the arrival of boxes with needed articles of apparel, and other remembrances, fell into the otherwise dull routine of soldier life, like bright sunshine after days of gloom. The remainder of the summer of 1862 sped softly by for the S. L. A., and they rested and recruited.]

LETTER ELEVENTH.

On to Manchester—The "wood brigade"—Resignation of Captain Ruffin—Promotions and election—The town—View of Richmond—Note.

MANCHESTER, VA.,
November 5, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—We abandoned our old quarters near Walthall Junction two weeks ago, and are now camping in a park by the old race course at Manchester on the James. It is a good enough place to camp in, except that both wood and water are rather scarce articles here, and these, as you may readily imagine, are very essential things for a soldier's comfort and welfare, especially as the nights are already getting rather cool, and fires are needed.

As to water, we manage to get enough for the men and for cooking, by going a little distance to the wells around, and the horses are driven to a brook half a mile away. And, as for wood, the several "messes" organize their "wood brigades" daily, and the men go off a little distance into the country, pick up whatever they can find for fire, and lug it into camp on their shoulders. It would amuse you to see the grotesque pictures some of the boys make with their big turns of "sticks," such as brush, broken fence-rails, etc., etc., as they come panting and sweating back, under their loads of wood.

Some of them, by using a rope to tie the sticks into bundles, carry almost enough to fill a cart. And you had better believe that the men keep a sharp eye on their precious piles of wood, lest some of the less energetic among the men "snake" away a piece now and then on the sly. If you want to raise a little excitement in camp, all you have to do is to pretend to be after some fellow's wood. You had as well poke a hornet's nest.

"Get out of my wood-pile, you thief," is quickly heard, generally followed by some such article as a frying-pan, or a hatchet, or a stone.

And then the cries of, "Go for him, John!" "Lam him with a piece!" "Throw your skillet at him!" and similar expressions, resound from side to side of the camp, while the offender beats a hasty retreat to shelter.

It is such episodes as these that serve to keep our life in camp from becoming utterly unendurable, and such little tableaux are rather encouraged and taken part in by our officers. For, to the credit of our commissioned officers, let me inform you that they do not hold themselves aloof from the men, but mingle with them, when off duty, with perfect familiarity and equality, regarding the men, socially and every way, as upon the same plane with themselves.

There have been some changes in the grades of our commanding officers recently. Captain Ruffin having sent in his resignation sometime since, it has been accepted, and he has lately bid his old Company adieu,

and has retired from service for a time. It is stated that it is his purpose to enter the cavalry service. As the result of his withdrawal, James D. Hankins has been promoted to the Captaincy, W. R. Barham becomes 1st Lieutenant, and J. W. Whitley, 2d Lieutenant, and an election has been held to fill the third place. The choice of the men was almost unanimous for W. W. Foreman for that office, and accordingly he becomes our 3d Lieutenant. He is very popular with all the men, and will make a fine commanding officer.

Manchester is a dingy and rather dilapidated old town, that appears to have been built without much regard to order or regularity, along the original highway leading toward Powhatan and Amelia counties, and seems to have stopped growing entirely. There is a post-office, which, of course, is being largely patronized by the men, and several churches, where the boys are pretty regular attendants. Guards, however, are stationed almost everywhere about the place, and a soldier cannot move around much without a written "permit." As many of our men as can get the consent of the "officer of the day" to do so, go along with the feed and commissary wagons as they go into Richmond every day, and thus manage to pass about without molestation from the guard.

The view of Richmond from this side of the James river is varied and picturesque. The State Capitol, which is now also the Capitol for the Confederate

States, the post-office, and many churches, mills and factories, stand out prominently in the picture, and the whole city lies before you in queenly splendor and beauty. The river here is more than the fourth of a mile wide, but is much broken up with a multitude of rocky islets and bowlders, against which the waters are ever beating in angry fury and noise. The bridges of the P. & R., and the R. & D. railroads are prominent objects in the view, and lower down old Mayo's wagon bridge is seen. The prospect is inspiring and enrapturing. Read Dyer's Gronger Hill, and apply the first few lines to the prospect that now calls forth these appreciative remarks from him who is now and always,

Your friend, B.

[Doubtless my comrades will recall, with some degree of complacency, those few pleasant weeks that sped by all too fleetly during that sunny autumn at Manchester—will remember Mathews, the postmaster, and the little ricketty hospital, where some of our men were cared for in sickness—also Dr. Childs, the head physician there—and, perhaps, too, will recall to mind the little match factory on the side of the main street, where friction matches were made. They remember yet the cotton mills down by Mayo's bridge, then idle and silent, and the little church, where they loved to attend the prayer-meetings. Of course, there have been great changes in the town since that pleasant autumn of 1862. But, for us of the S. L. A., the pictures of Manchester

that memory will call up, will be of those olden things that were there when first we saw the place, during the ruder days of war. But, for more of our soldier life there, see the next letter. And here, as well as any where, I will name the new men, the recruits, that came to us during 1862:

Archibald R. Atkins, William T. Atkins, and Calvin Baker, Alexander Baker and James Baker, three brothers, all the above from Isle of Wight county; Joseph H. Barham, from Surry, early in the year; William O. Barlow, from Isle of Wight; William T. Bell (Boston), from Surry; Thomas T. Cockes and Abner B. Cofer, both from Surry; Peter F. Crocker and William Crocker, from Isle of Wight; Edward L. Collier and Robert A. Collier, brothers, from Surry; George W. Dean, Matthew A. Delk, and Hezekiah Delk, from Isle of Wight; John W. Edwards, Thomas N. Edwards, Anson Goodrich, from Surry county; John P. Goodson, Milton H. Gray, and Junius Gray, from Isle of Wight; John A. Gwaltney, from Surry, and Pembrook D. Gwaltney, from Isle of Wight; James Hatchell and William E. Harris, from Surry; Bird Harvey and George C. Holmes, from Southampton; Thomas A. James, Wiley Jones, James Judkins, Benjamin O. Judkins and John R. Kea, from Surry; William E. Long and William B. Moore, from Surry; William J. Presson, from Southampton, and John F. Ramsey, from Isle of Wight; Asa Rogers (our "Commodore"), from Surry; and Benton D. Thomas, from Petersburg;

Lewis L. Turner, James M. Turner, and W. Henry Turner, from Isle of Wight; James C. Underwood, from Surry; Linnaeus W. White, from Isle of Wight; and Thomas H. Williams (the shoemaker), from Prince George county.

A goodly array of names, and it includes much of the very best material of our Company. These additions, forty-six in all, joined to the twenty-four who came in during the latter part of 1861, make the total list of names on our muster-roll 123. From this deduct, for deaths and discharged men of the 35-year list, 21, and the net strength of the Company, at the close of 1862, was 102 men.

Of the above recruits, Pembrook D. Gwaltney, now of Smithfield, Va., never served with the Company. Being an expert artisan and gunsmith, on joining our Company in July, 1862, he was at once detailed for service in the Ordnance Department, where he remained till the close of the war. See an appendix at the close of the book.]

LETTER TWELFTH.

Frame barracks—Sick men—Foreign residents—Lee at Fredericksburg—The city defences—A snow storm—Rations—Note.

MANCHESTER, VA.,
Nov. 20, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—The S. L. A. having been ordered to occupy Battery No. 16, on the western confines of Manchester, where there is plenty of water and a fair supply of wood nearby, we are now supposed to be in winter quarters, good frame buildings, with brick chimneys. Accordingly, our tents have been packed, and we have barracks where we may have fires inside and a little more room for bunks.

But, as yet, we have to cook out of doors—when we have anything to cook—for there is no room in the barracks for the camp kettles and mess-pans and other utensils, and, if there were room enough, the fireplaces are too small for cooking anything larger than a snow-bird. If we stay here long, maybe the different messes will build them cooking shelters, and then we will have both great-house and kitchen, and will feel almost as if we were living at home again. It is by no means certain, however, that any such good luck awaits us.

This battery was constructed for heavy guns, and for infantry, but only a few of the large pieces have been put in place. There is no infantry here, and no magazine or storeroom for arms or ammunition. It is an unfinished place, and perhaps will never advance beyond the present stage of completion.

A dozen or more of our men are on the sick list, and most of them have been sent to the little rickety hospital down in the village. An old snuff factory near Mayo's bridge has been converted into a temporary hospital for the few soldiers that are now on this side of the river, and a Doctor Childs, a resident physician of Manchester, has charge. The ladies of the town devote some attention to our sick, and sometimes they furnish from their own homes some delicacy or nourishment for the men. So the little wayside hospitals, as it were, like this one here, are the best, after all.

There are a great many able-bodied foreign residents in this place, who, but for the fact that they are of foreign extraction, would, I suppose, have to be in the army. They claim to be exempt from military service because they have never become naturalized citizens of the State, and hence our Government has no right to force them into service. They remain at home in their ease, while their betters are marching, entrenching and fighting, to protect them and their property from molestation. This looks hardly fair to the native sons of

the State, who are baring their breasts to the storm in all its intensity and fury. If these men would work to help produce food for the rest of us, it would be less unequal. But nearly all of them that I have seen appear to be thoroughly idle and worthless. They are non-producers, and therefore only parasites, living and loafing at the expense of the general public.

And who knows but that some of them are spies, watching our Government, and the trend of affairs, and keeping the enemy informed by some sort of "grape-vine telegraph" of all that is going on here at the Capital of the Confederacy? I, for one, believe that a strict watch should be kept over all these people. I am told there are great numbers of them in Richmond. In one sense it may be politic to allow them to batten here, but it seems to me to be unwise, if not weak, to do so. One of these same parasites had the audacity, a few days since, to say to me:

"I could spike every gun in that battery," meaning Battery No. 16.

I simply replied to him: "Come and try it, then. We have a guard there now."

The remark seemed to be inspired by a spirit antagonistic to the Southern cause.

After fighting some terrible battles in Maryland, and after the capture of Harper's Ferry by General Stonewall Jackson, General Lee has returned to Virginia, and is now in the vicinity of Fredericksburg. McClel-

lan, as he did not succeed in whipping Lee, as it was his business to have done, has again been "bounced" by his Government, and a General Burnside has succeeded him. Whether the last elevation will be able either to burn or turn any one's sides, remains to be seen.

There are rumors that stirring events are expected to happen hereabouts soon. Burnside is manifesting great activity, though it is so far advanced into the season of winter, and a battle may take place very soon. It is reported that both the York and James rivers are full of transports, and it is conjectured they are conveying an army to attack Richmond. In this event, with Lee engaged with Burnside on the Rappahannock, the forces around Richmond would, doubtless, have more than they could do to hold back an invading army, advancing on us from the York or the James.

So far as I have seen, or learned, there are very few forces stationed here now. How easy it would seem for any foreign citizen (?) so disposed, to inform an advancing enemy of our weak condition just at this time, and then a leader with any push about him, by making a sudden dash upon the defences here, might easily ride over them into the very heart of the city.

And our earthworks—these on the southern side of the city, at least—even were there plenty of men here to occupy them, look to be weak and entirely inadequate for checking an army of resolute men. Let us hope that, despite our suspicions and fears, there are really no spies here to betray us into the hands of a wily and watchful enemy.

We have had quite a snow storm up here, and the ground is carpeted with a four-inch layer of the most beautiful white plush, spotless and pure as a maiden's prayer. It is cold to-day. A brisk and biting wind is coming down across the James, that finds its way readily through the faded and thin uniforms of the men. In the absence of overcoats, the men go about wrapped in their blankets, which are thus made to do double service—a cover by night, a protection by day. Even a piece of an old tent, anything that can be utilized, serves to keep out some of the cold. I trust the families at home, the women and children, are better provided for against the coming storms and blasts.

Rations are out in camp. But this is "draw-day," as the men call it, and our wagons have gone into town for supplies. But they will not return before the afternoon, and all will have to fast until then. True, Jack, with his pies, may be around soon, but money is almost as scarce in this camp as are rations. And it takes a big bill to buy a small pie from Jack. O, for a dash at the sweet potatoes, corn pone, and sorghum molasses down in old Surry!

May the good angel guard and keep you all, now and evermore.

Your friend, B.

[The Company did not repose long at Battery 16. And, after all, it would have been but a bleak, cold place for a winter camp. There were no thick woods around

to break off the northern winds, which would have had a clear sweep upon us, across the James at this point. It was well for us that we were moved to another and more sheltered position on the eastern side of Richmond.]

LETTER THIRTEENTH.

Christmas eve—Church bells—Christmas boxes—Fredericksburg—Attached to Lightfoot's Battalion—Our camp—No snug cabins—Note.

CAMP ROPER, VA.,
Dec. 24, 1862.

My Dear Friend:—It is now December 24th—Christmas eve again, the second that we have passed in camp. But how great the contrast in our condition and surroundings with those of last year, down at Camp Pemberton, in Isle of Wight! Then rations were plentiful and good, and we could get plenty of good things from our homes, not a great many miles away. Here the most of us are but thinly clad and scantily fed, and we have no snug cabins to shelter us from the blasts and snows of winter.

The day is bright and beautiful, but cold, and there is no appearance of the good cheer and extra fixings that used to come to us at Christmas time. How I would like to look in upon the homes of old Surry, to see if her people are thinking of the soldier boys to-day!

The church bells of the city are sounding out loud and clear, doubtless calling the ladies' aid societies and committees together for the purpose of devising ways and means, and planning for pleasant surprises for friends and kindred somewhere in the army. Many,

no doubt, will get the Christmas box to-morrow, and thus be made happy. It is well. It is pleasant to be remembered. It is pleasant to remember. And I know that the wives and daughters, and mothers and sisters, of the men of the S. L. A. will think of their loved ones in the army, and at least send up a prayer to the throne of grace for their safety and well-being, if they can send no box or token of remembrance to the men.

But perhaps there will be some boxes, too, from the friends in Surry and Isle of Wight. The wagons go into town early to-morrow morning, and one of them will call at the depot, to see if there may be anything for any of the men.

Letters from home! And Christmas boxes! How these things will cheer the hearts of the men and revive their drooping spirits! How sweet to have tangible evidence that some one cares for you! Blessings on the senders of the letters and boxes.

In the recent great contest of arms at Fredericksburg, Burnside appears to have been badly beaten, and his army has returned to its first position on the northern side of the river. He got his own sides burned with a vengeance, especially on Mary's Hill. It was a decided victory for the Southern arms.

Our Company has but recently been attached to Col. Charles A. Lightfoot's Battalion of Light Artillery, composed now of three batteries, namely, Captain

Rives's Battery, of Albemarle county, six fine guns; Captain Thornton's Battery, from Caroline county, also six splendid guns; and our own, or Hankins's Battery, of four guns. But they are not the same four small, light pieces that we had at first. Those were turned in some time ago, and were replaced with four good and effective cannon of greater calibre and weight. Two of them are brass 12-pound Napoleon field pieces, and two are 9-pound rifled guns of the best pattern. Thus the Battalion has sixteen good guns, with horses and all necessary equipments for effective warfare. It is regarded as a strong command. Colonel Lightfoot is fast becoming popular with the men. He is a native of Culpeper county.

We are now in camp on the eastern side of Richmond, one mile from the corporation line, and near Battery No. 2, where Captain Harrison's Prince George-Surry Heavy Artillery is stationed. As to quarters, we have none yet, except our cloth tents (which have been brought into requisition again), and such shanties as the men have been able to construct, to cook and eat in. The outlook is, that a piece of cotton cloth will be our only protection from the snows and storms of winter, while we remain at this place. I trust the season will prove to be a mild one. Few of the men have any good and warm clothing, and they will miss the snug quarters that we had a year ago. But there is plenty of wood, and also good water here, and we are sheltered from the northern winds by a piece of forest, on the

border of which our camp is laid out. The guard duty will be light this winter, as we will have no outpost to fill.

May the sun shine warm upon you at home.

Your friend, B.

[Our chances for passing the winter comfortably at Camp Roper were far better than they could have been at Battery 16, and it was a fortunate circumstance for us that we were moved. Besides plenty of wood for fires, the water was excellent, and we were camped near to men who, to numbers in our Company, were old acquaintances and friends. Many of the men in Battery 2 were from Surry county, and, therefore, well known to many of the S. L. A. The intercourse between the two commands became general and frequent, and, in a social way, the winter of 1862-'63 passed very agreeably for us. There was but little sickness among the men; the season was mild, with but little snow, and nothing occurred to disturb our repose, or call us out of our quarters, except one little false alarm.]

LETTER FOURTEENTH.

A night on picket—Snowed under—Only a cavalry raid—And a false alarm—Note.

CAMP ROPER, VA.,
Jany. 11, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—After a few weeks of almost blissful repose for the soldier life, we have had another little experience of war—"bitter-sweet" some of the boys called it, since, though we suffered considerably, we met no enemy, and, of course, did no fighting, and soon returned to our camp.

On Thursday afternoon, the 8th instant, our Battery received orders to march at once. It was near sunset when the despatch came, and we were in for a night on the outer lines. We were to occupy a position on the York river railway where it intersects the outer line of defences, for there are three separate lines of earthworths or other defences, that circumvallate the city on all sides. It was near 10 o'clock when we reached the designated place.

Our four guns were put in positions to render it as warm for the enemy as could be contrived in the darkness, and sentries were posted to keep a sharp lookout for any advancing foe, including, of course, an advance picket, some distance to the front. The rest of us, not

on the guard detail, spread the tarpaulins (tarred canvas, one of which goes with each gun, to spread over it when a battery is in park), and then the cannoneers, each one wrapped in his blanket, lay down together on the canvas, by the guns to rest and sleep.

But, lo! before morning, for the night was cloudy and stormy-looking, down thick and fast fell the fleecy snow, covering us all with a blanket of white, both warm and beautiful! It is needless to say that we slept soundly, despite the snow. A soldier can sleep anywhere. No foe disturbed us, and the snow only served to keep us warm under another canvas that had been drawn over us, after all had laid down.

It fell out that the detachment at one of the guns had made their bed in a graveyard, and the boys of that gun slept that night literally among the dead. But they slept well, and perhaps had sweet dreams of home and loved ones. None of them would have laid awake if he had known that the dead were there.

The morrow dawned bright and beautiful. The grotesque figures of some of the men, as they crawled from under their robes of snow, evoked many a laugh and jest. The novelty and romance of the occasion dispelled all gloom and disposition to murmur, and good humor and jolity were in the ascendant. It was much better than fighting and bleeding would have been, for no enemy had come, and no one complained of the snow or the bitter cold.

> "And mournfully over the frozen earth
> The wind sobbed loud and shrill,"

but, with the first blush of daylight, the men were allowed to build fires, and their petty sufferings from the cold were soon forgotten.

It turned out that no enemy was anywhere around. It was a false alarm. There had been a cavalry raid somewhere down about the railroad station at West Point, and the rumor had grown out of that. But the enemy, like sensible fellows, were, no doubt, quietly sleeping in their warm bunks, instead of trying to pierce the lines before Richmond on any such night as that had been.

Before noon, orders came for our return to winter quarters, and you may be sure the men lost no time in obeying it. We found that "Company Q" had kept the fires steadily burning during our absence, and—they had also consumed nearly all the available rations. But we put them on duty bringing in a fresh supply of wood, and soon all was peace again.

Peace be with you at home.

Your friend, B.

[This "Company Q" is nearly always present, in greater or less number, in every military company that goes out into service. It is a sort of unavailable part, composed of the men not quite sick enough for the hospital, but not effective for active service or hard duty. It is a difficult point sometimes to determine who should and who should not have a place in this "Company."]

LETTER FIFTEENTH.

Snow and wind storm—Tents overturned—Rat venison—A new flag—Battalion drills—Note.

CAMP ROPER, VA.,
Feby. 6, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—Yesterday, February 5th, it snowed nearly all day, covering the ground by night several inches deep, with its fleecy ermine. As darkness came on, the wind rose higher and higher, till it became a terrific gale. In consequence thereof, several of the tents were overturned, and the boys put out of doors.

You may depend upon it that, amid the darkness and confusion, there was some lively scampering around for awhile, trying to put the tents up again. But it is no fool's job to set a tent upright before a hard wind, even in daylight. And at night—and such a night—the task was almost a hopeless one. But, as Napoleon said to his engineer, when he asked him if the route was practicable: "Barely possible, Sire," said the engineer. "Let us go forward, then," replied the great commander. And so the boys of the S. L. A., though the task of erecting tents in a wind-storm at night was hardly possible, yet they determined to go forward, and finally they accomplished the job. The tents were re-

stored to their former places and positions again. And if some things were uttered now and then that the boys had not learned at Sunday school, would you blame them very much, under the circumstances? But, despite a lapsus linguæ, spoken now and then in an undertone, good humor and good sense prevailed, and no one refused the helping hand, that I have heard of.

To-day is damp and chilly enough, and not many songs enliven the passing hour. But the tents are up, and most of the men are snugly coiled within them. The discomforts of last night are almost forgotten, and the damp blankets are drying by the fires. Paths have been made in the snow throughout the whole camp, and to the hospital and officers' quarters.

Rations are not as varied and plentiful with us as once they were. We do not get meat every day now, and the little that we do get seems to have shrunken to twelve ounces to the pound by the time it has reached us. It is seldom that we get bacon, and first-class beef does not come our way. And so, to help out the shortage in meat, finding that several large, sleek rats had taken up their abode in the feed-house, and were making too free with the corn, one of the men conceived the idea of utilizing them to his own account. He captured some of them, and, after dressing them nicely, fried them to a crisp and inviting brown, using plenty of black pepper, to disguise any oddish flavor the venison might possess.

He declared that the meat was as good and sweet as any chicken he ever ate. But I suspect it had been a long time since he had tasted chicken.

Some ladies of Richmond, becoming patriotically inclined, made with their own hands, and presented to our Company recently a beautiful battle flag. The whole Company was turned out to receive it. W. Gordon McCabe, the accomplished Adjutant of the Battalion, presented it in an eloquent speech, in which he referred to the glorious deeds of Henry of Navarre and the stainless honor of Sir Phillip Sidney—and Captain Hankins responded in a few appropriate remarks. God bless the ladies, and bless our cause!

We are having Battalion drills nearly every fine day now. The three Batteries manœuvre together, going through all the movements laid down in the tactics with ease and celerity. Sometimes spectators come out from the city to witness the drilling, and the general testimony is, so I am told, that our is, not only the best drilled Company of this Battalion, but the best drilled in the whole Confederate service. As many of these spectators are high officials, military men, this is no slight or idle praise.

"Closing of a wintry day,
Far from home and ease;
Wailing voices murmur sad
Through the icy trees."

God bless and keep our homes from the rude invader's touch.

Your friend, B.

[The incident anent the venison of rat meat is no soldier's yarn, but an occurence that actually took place, as I had it from the man himself. He was one of those boys whom nothing could down, a capital soldier, and when he took the notion to do a thing, he did it, no matter who might laugh. Ridicule or banter cut no ice with him. The event will serve to show to what straits for food the soldier was sometimes driven.]

LETTER SIXTEENTH.

Good health of the men—"Broom day"—Confederate stationery—Skulkers—A revival spirit—Songs in camp—An incident—Note.

CAMP ROPER, VA.,
Feby. 20, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—Notwithstanding the fact that we have been living in tents all winter, exposed to cold and dampness, I think the Company has never enjoyed better health at any period since the war began. We have very few sick, and those only mild cases. Indeed, we have had but one sick man in the hospital for quite a while. The worst ailments that have afflicted the men this winter are, short rations and this intolerable camp itch. The last, indeed, is extremely exasperating, and it prevails generally through the whole Company. As to short rations, that is a thing which a soldier is expected to get used to, and submit to uncomplainingly.

In fact, we are getting to endure both of these troubles very philosophically. We have learned that they are parts of the inevitable belongings of a soldier's life, and it is no use to fret about them. "What can't be cured, must be endured." Doctor Dunn doctors us for the one, and good Milton Gray—our Commissary Sergeant—does the very best he can, I suppose, for the other. If any of the men are not quite content with

the treatment they receive in either case, they have no redress but to "grumble and endure it." Either malady serves to break a little the dull monotony of other things, such as the ever recurring roll calls, drills, guard duty and sweeping the camp.

And this is "broom day," and our camp has to be swept again. On these occasions one man, at least, for each tent, has to fall in with his broom, and help to sweep the camp all over. These sweepings occur once a week, if the weather permits, and all debris has to be gathered up and burned. It is a sanitary regulation for which all can see the utility, and there is very little complaining about it. It becomes absolutely necessary when a body of men are camped long at one place. But some of the boys do not take to the task very kindly, but are disposed to shirk and shift about whenever they can. Some men will shirk at anything—but eating. And some of the prankish ones, when they are forced to take up the broom, contrive to raise all the dust they can, especially about the tents of the officers, or of any comrade they wish to tease a little, in which case they soon render themselves a general nuisance.

You will notice the quality of this paper that I am writing upon. It is coarse and inferior, and nothing in comparison with the nice paper we used to have before the war began. It is made at the paper mill in Richmond, and they have not the facilities for manufacturing fine paper. But it is a product of our own

country, and appeals to our patriotism. It should be dear, therefore, to every true son and daughter of the South. Keep this sheet, and others like it, and in future years,

"As rolls time's furrowing course along,"

perchance some one will prize it, and preserve it as a sacred memento of these trying days. Note the Confederate flag, with the thirteen stars, to represent the thirteen Confederate States, and the stirring stanza at the head of the page. They appeal loudly to our love for the South and her holy cause.

"Gather around your country's flag,
Men of the South, the hour has come—
None may falter, none may lag—
March to the sound of the fife and drum."

And this reminds me to say that there are yet a few men left at home, who ought to be in the army doing their part for their country's independence. Shame that there are any such shirks and skulkers to be found among Southern born—any so lost to duty and true manhood, as thus to hide away at home, when their proper place is in the ranks! What will be the status of such men in society, when the war is over? A hundred times would I prefer to lie

"Beneath the hasty funeral mound,
Where Nature took me to her sleep,"

than to a scorn and lot like theirs.

I hear that a great religious spirit and revival is spreading throughout Lee's army, and some of the other armies of the South, and there are some evidences of it here, and in other camps about Richmond. Old professors that had become lukewarm in their zeal, are arousing to a sense of their duty, and many of the openly sinful are growing more temperate and reverent in their conversation and regard for religious things. There is less of cursing and profligacy, and much less of card-playing in our Company now than formerly. The voice of prayer is often heard in camp among the men, and many commands now have regular, or at least, occasional, preaching. Many ministers have gone out as evangelists to the armies, and some have gone into the ranks as private soldiers, or have become regular chaplains in some command. Their example and teaching are exerting a wide-spread and salutary influence. Rev. J. W. Ward, of Isle of Wight, has preached to our Company once recently, and other ministers hold meetings near us occasionally.

Almost nightly now, before the tattoo is sounded, we hear the voice of song in our camp, religious and revival songs and hymns. There are several men here who sing well, and these assemble together and pass an hour or two together at night very pleasantly. Sergeant N. B. Pond's tent is headquarters for these exercises, and doubtless, to some extent, this method of praise and prayer is doing good here, and toning down some of the rougher vices of the men. May it lead finally to a great

outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all the armies, and all the people of all the South. A soldier may fight and be a religious and God-fearing man, too.

But let me tell you of a little incident that has really taken place in our camp lately—one of the little comedies, not altogether innocent, but not wholly harmful, that are occasionally happening, and which serve as safety-valves, to let off the superfluous steam engendered by the life of confinement and idleness in camp:

One of the songs that were being sung quite frequently, almost nightly in fact, by our religious choir was that somewhat eccentric refrain:

"Scotland's burning! Scotland's burning!
Cast on water! cast on water!"

and so some of the prankish set among our boys conceived the idea of turning a little joke on the men in Sergeant Pond's tent. As a few of the tents had been fixed up with rude dirt chimneys for fireplaces, and Sergeant Pond's was one of these, it gave the boys a fine chance to play their game. And so, one night, one of the smallest among the men, with a bucket of water in hand, was lifted up by a big, strong fellow to the top of the little stick chimney. And just as the choir rang out the alarm,

"Scotland's burning!
Cast on water!"

the little fellow on the chimney cast his bucket of water down upon the fire inside, which deluged the whole fireplace, put out the fire, and scattered the embers in every direction!

Of course, too, it put a sudden stop to the song, and sent the men quickly out of the tent after the offenders. But not in time to discover who they were. Before they were fairly out of the tent, the boys had gained their own bunks, and were enjoying the fun at a distance.

The choir soon saw the joke, and, as they could do no more, submitted quietly. But it is presumed that nothing more will be heard of "Scotland's burning" for some time.

With a prayer for your continued safety and welfare at home, I remain,

Your friend, B.

[It was about this time, or a little previous to it, that all the leading denominations of Christians in Richmond, and other cities of the Confederacy, began an earnest and systematic effort to supply the armies with religious literature of a practical and serious nature. Tracts, pamphlets, religious papers, small books and testaments, songs for the camp, and other forms of pious reading matter for the soldiers of the Confederacy were printed and distributed on all sides, wherever there was a company or body of soldiers to be found. Each denomination had its depository of books and tracts for distribution among the soldiers, and every soldier who

applied at any of the publishing houses, was supplied gratis with something of a religious nature to read. Every evangelist and chaplain who went into the army, carried along a supply of tracts, to give to the men. Even the women, in many instances, took upon themselves the benevolent task of visiting the camps nearest the cities, that they might convey to the men the spiritual food they so much needed, and, in most cases, desired and begged for.

It was a noble work, in which the women of the Confederacy took a large, zealous and active part. And the amount of good that was accomplished by this agency was incalculable and lasting. The reader who may desire to see an extended account of this grand labor of love, will find it in Dr. William Jones's "Christ in the Camp." The religious literature of the Southern Confederacy, that was called into being by the desire to supply the armies with reading of a spiritual nature, if it could be collected together in one body, would form a most interesting library of practical and serious reading. Pity that some one did not think in time to collect and retain copies of it all.

But it was not alone in the distribution of good books and tracts that the women took a large and an active part. The future historian, in writing up the record of those times, should not fail to mention the zealous and self-denying labors of the mothers and daughters, and the wives and sisters, in ministering to the bodily comforts, as well as the spiritual benefit, of the soldiers.

Their tender aid and encouragement were found everywhere, by the cot of the sick or the wounded, at the home of the fatherless and widows, by the couch of the dying, at the grave of the dead. Whether it were the offering of flowers for the hospital, the little delicacy for the sick, the word of warning for the irreligious, the voice of entreaty in the prayer-meeting, or a song or a Bible text for the dying, the noble women of the South, in the days that tried men most, stood foremost and pre-eminent. Their record is bright in deeds of mercy for the men who wore the gray.]

LETTER SEVENTEENTH.

Sabbath breaking—Inspections and parades—Government work—Conduct of officials—Sir Matthew Hale's Sabbath law—"Permits"—Note.

CAMP ROPER, VA.,
March 10, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—Sunday the 8th was a bright and beautiful day here, and we had inspection and Battalion drill, which occupied the whole of the forenoon, and it was 1 o'clock before our Battery returned to the park, and the men were dismissed, and permitted to go about cooking their dinners. As to the latter item, perhaps it mattered little, for there was not much to cook, and it did not require much time to get through with it. Yet, being Sunday, a day that should ever be set apart for rest and religious exercises, it seemed a needless desecration of the sacred law to keep holy that day. But such has been the general practice with our higher officials from the beginning of the civil strife. If there is anything above the ordinary to be done, such as a dress parade, regimental inspection, or a drilling contest, it has to take place on Sunday. Nearly all the big drills and reviews are ordered for Sunday. Sunday seems to be regarded as the great drill day.

Were this a necessary feature of the war, a matter which could not be attended to as well on any other day,

there would be some excuse for the wholesale abuse of the day of rest. But such is not the case. The exigences of war do not require it, for these things are not essentials. In many cases they are no more than a display of vanity and pride on the part of officials who desire to show off their commands to their friends. Many a grand review has been ordered to please a few lady visitors to camp on Sunday.

In the case of the Government works, the manufacture of arms, ammunition, and war material, there may often be real necessity for Sunday labor. Supplies must be had, and if the need is great and pressing, the work may properly go on without intermission. But this urgency can hardly continue all the time, without cessation. It may well be feared that the pressure is often assumed to exist only as an excuse. I am told that work goes on at all the Government shops and works in Richmond constantly on Sunday. And I know they do not stop for Sunday down in the dock at Rocketts, but continue to hammer away on the ironclads on that day as earnestly as upon any other day.

There is reason to believe that many of our higher officials are not as pious and Sabbath-loving as they should be. I fear they care very little for God's holy day. I suspect some of them suppose that the private soldier has no need for a day of rest, and that he should work or drill on Sunday, in order to earn his wages and make a better soldier of him.

I do not believe that Sabbath-breaking pays, even in time of war. Sir Matthew Hale's law of the Sabbath

comes to my mind very often, and I could wish that it were written in very large characters on every Government shop, and all the war material in our land. Here it is:

"A Sabbath well spent,
Brings a week of content,
And health for the toils of to-morrow;
But a Sabbath profaned,
Whatsoe'er may be gained,
Is a sure forerunner of sorrow."

Could anything be more direct and pointed than that? or more obviously true, when considered in the light of lifelong observation and experience? The rule is just as applicable to nations as to individuals.

With me this Sabbath profanation is a serious matter. I have my fears of what the final issue of this war will be, wholly on this account. I fear God will not continue to bless our cause, as evidently He has done hitherto, unless this sin is turned from by all in authority. If our cause fails, at last, I believe it will be due, in great part, if not entirely, to our own national mistakes and sins in regard to the law of the Sabbath day, and not because our fight is not just and upright. But enough of this.

Our men are allowed "permits" almost daily now. And they make use of them to attend the churches in the city. There is good preaching and religious exercises two or three times a week, and often nightly, at

all the leading churches. Whole squads of the men go in town together, and the pastors and people welcome them, and invite them to come.

My friend, pray for the success of our cause. Pray for the spread of religion in the army. Pray for those in authority, that all of them may become pious and God-fearing men; and pray for the Sabbath to be respected and honored by all, both high and law. Then our cause *must* prosper.

Your friend, B.

[After forty-five years of added experience and observation in regard to the Sabbath since this letter was written, the writer is decidedly of the opinion, that it was on account of two sins especially—one of them national, or rather official, and the other individual—that God withdrew his favor from us as a people, and permitted the South to be defeated in the war of 1861-'65. One of these offenses, the official, was the general and shameful violation of the Sabbath day, the needless secularizing of the sacred hour for rest and spiritual improvement; and the other, the individual sin, *that of intemperance!* I have no doubt but that many a battle was lost, and many a life, too, because some one in command had imbibed too freely of some form of intoxicant. General Stonewall Jackson had a horror of intoxicating liquors in the army. Could this evil have been banished entirely from the army, and had the Sunday hour been always and everywhere duly regarded, *the South might have won her cause.*]

LETTER EIGHTEENTH.

The "everlasting" itch—Williams and his remedy—Bright hopes, but dark results—That, too, passes—Rumors of battle—Note.

CAMP ROPER, VA.,
March 30, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—In my letter of February 20th, I spoke incidentally of that trying malady denominated, in military phrase, the camp itch. Well, it does not abate. Far from it. It seems here to stay. Dr. Dunn's red precipitates, mercurial ointments and lotions, do not cure, and what the boys wanted was something that would cure, no matter how bad or bitter it might be. Anything that would effect a change for the better would be welcome. The boys did not wish to be afflicted with the same disease all the time. They wanted a change, and this itch was perennial, it was everlasting.

And so a man was found equal to the occasion, one who knew of a "certain, safe and quick" cure—one of our own men. It was T. H. Williams, "Shoemaker" Williams, as we all call him. He knew of a plant, a decoction of which would cure any case of camp itch in the Confederacy. But the said plant grew nowhere else but in Surry county. Down there, not far from the home of the said Williams, were loads of it, and if—if he could only get down there for a short time, he

would soon have in camp enough of the leaves to make tea for the whole Battalion, to say nothing of one Company. But just at this time neither permit or furlough is granted to any one. But the boys have—or rather they had, faith in Williams's prescription, and they became urgent that he be sent home for the leaves. And Captain Hankins, he, too, listened tenderly to the story, and, after putting his wits together, for he likes to please the men, soon devised a plan. He would send Williams to Surry on a detail. The detail, being a matter of duty, and service for the army, would go through.

And so it did. Williams was delighted, and the men pressed his departure. The detail was as good as a furlough would have been for Williams, for he only wanted to get home for a little space. The detail was for five days, and promptly on the fifth day Williams returned to camp with ever so many bags of leaves—leaves of the so-called "sheep laurel" or lambkill, the *Kalmia angustifolia* of botany.

This was the plant. And a strong decoction of its leaves was to be the great "safe and certain" cure for the exasperating *scabies militaris* that had afflicted them so long, by day and by night.

Bright hopes were now in the ascendant. Speedily, several camp kettles, filled with water and leaves of the kalmia, were placed over the fires, and brought to a boil—for Williams had told them to make the decoction strong. He really wanted it to cure, no doubt, and thought he was advising them for the best.

And then the boys "prepared for action," as the artillery phrase is. Stripping off their shirts, several of them at the same time—such was the haste to have the remedy working a cure—several of them at once began vigorously to apply the lotion that was to rid them forever of the detested scabies. But before the first ones that began to use it had proceeded even a little way, their physiognomies, before so bright and anticipative, began to change suddenly and wonderfully! and some impromptu adjectives, not of the admiration class, began to be uttered without rule or reason. And quickly their words grew louder, and faster and fiercer. The other boys who had just started in, paused for an explanation. But they did not have to wait to be told, for as soon as the tea began to act just a little, they knew how it was themselves, and they, too, joined in the outcry.

And soon there arose such an outburst that the "officer of the day" heard it, and came forth to learn the cause of it. And Williams himself heard it, on his post in the Battery, for he was on guard duty that day, and he wondered what had occasioned the uproar. It began to trouble him.

And then some of the boys who had not yet tested the prescription, seeing how matters stood, began to laugh and halloo and jest at the suffering ones. But that did not stop the turmoil. The agony produced by that sheep-laurel tea, and the outcries and anger were almost alarming. The imprecations that descended on

the head of Williams were loud and bitter, and if some of the men could have got hold of him just then, he might have fared badly. But he was on post, and none of them dare molest him then.

But, after awhile the pain abated a little. The tableau passed from the tragic to the comic. Good humor re-asserted itself. A better feeling began to prevail, and the cloud that had been raised passed by. Those kettles of tea were silently overturned, and no more has been made. The boys all declare they prefer the disease to the remedy, ten to one.

There are rumors that the Federal cavalry under Stoneman are attempting to turn Lee's flank above Fredericksburg—and also that another large body has been seen coming in this direction from the York river. We are expecting orders to march, and, in any event, we will not remain here much longer, as the spring is well advanced, and the weather mild and fine.

May the good angels guard and keep you and us from all harm.

Your friend, B.

[I have thought that this letter, relating how our comrade, Thomas H. Williams, studied out a plan to get home, at a time when neither permit nor furlough was granted to any one, though perhaps a little overdrawn in some particulars, would do to go in along

with the rest. The occurrence did actually take place, and no doubt some of the survivors, those certainly who tried the tea, will recall some of the incidents. I think Comrade Williams never did stand in quite so well any more with some of the men. They always entertained a little grudge toward him, on account of that sheep-laurel tea. He certainly lost his reputation as a doctor, and some of the boys were so discourteous at times as to remind him of the well-known adage: Ne sutor ultra crepidam, let not the shoemaker go beyond his last. He was a good man and a good soldier. But he did finally return to his last, and got a detail to work in the Government shoemaking shop in Richmond. He died a few years after the close of the war at his home in Surry.

And still, in Mem'ry's hallowed halls,
We'll sometimes pause to view
The scenes that Friendship yet recalls,
Of comrades tried and true.

LETTER NINETEENTH.

Suffolk recaptured—Big siege guns—Marching orders—Destination—The Home Guard—Note.

CAMP ROPER, VA.,
April 20, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—We learn here that a portion of Lee's army under Longstreet, has lately recaptured the town of Suffolk, and driven the Federals back several miles toward Norfolk. Thus the Southside counties are freed again from the enemy that has been ravaging and despoiling, and in many cases, burning the homes of our people. Whether or not it is the purpose of our Government to maintain an army at Suffolk, and keep the foe out of that part of the State, does not appear, but I sincerely trust that such is the case. It would put a stop to those raiding bands (perhaps most of them only lawless freebooters, in fact) that have been prowling around down there, stealing the horses, killing the cattle, robbing the hen-roosts, and burning the mills and the private dwellings of the people. How pleased the S. L. A. would be to be ordered into that part of the State! It would be going back home again. I was in Richmond when Longstreet's men passed through, on their way down to Suffolk. I trust it is the intention to hold that section permanently.

Thus active operations for the summer have started. We have orders to be ready to march at a moment's notice, but in what direction we shall go, none of us yet know. Perhaps this will be the deciding year of the war, and reveal what the end is to be, if it does not bring the end itself. I hear that all is astir in the armies at Fredericksburg. The Northern Government has sent Burnside down, and put in "Fighting Joe Hooker" at the head of affairs. Perhaps Hooker thinks it is about time for him to be *hooking in* General Lee and his men. The enemy's cavalry forces, now under a General Stoneman, seem to be trying a flank movement around Lee's army, in the direction of Louisa Court-house. Perhaps it is in that direction that we are to go.

I saw yesterday, at the Southern depot in Richmond, some of the largest cannon ever cast in the Confederate States. I was told they were 700-pounders, and I tell you they were rousers. I could have crawled into them easily. They were cast at the Richmond Iron Works, and are to go to Charleston, where the gallant Beauregard is still holding off the Federal fleet and army investing that port. The Confederacy is not so badly off, after all, in the way of supplying her fortified posts with large guns and ammunition. It is a sight to a countryman to go through those shops and see the great piles of shot and shell, and other paraphernalia of war.

Well, we have marching orders. Our entire command (Lightfoot's Battalion), and a large part of the

City Defences, all under command of Colonel Rhett, are ordered to proceed without delay to Gordonsville and the vicinity. Colonel Rhett is a South Carolinian and said to be a rigid disciplinarian and determined fighter, and I suppose we are in for some rough experiences. If we meet the enemy, I feel sure that Rhett will fight them. But I do not know who is to defend the Capital, in case of a sudden foray of the enemy from the York or the James, when all these forces here are gone. I hear, however, that they have a pretty strong Home Guard here, and I suppose they will have to turn out and repel the foe if he comes.

The fact that there is a regularly organized and equipped Home Guard in both Richmond and Petersburg, does not appear to be generally known. Nothing is ever said about it in the public press. Perhaps the head authorities wish to keep it a secret. And it may be better that it should be so. The body is made up of middle-age and old men and boys, mere lads, not yet old enough for service in the regular army. As they are the home people, those whose homes and every sacred tie are centred here, they may be counted upon to fight with resolution, if the pinch comes, notwithstanding the lack of military training and discipline. It is a sorry man that will not defend his own ingle and home.

Good-by. We are off at noon, and are to go by rail. So the necessity must be urgent. Hooker's cavalry have crossed the Rappahannock some distance above Fred-

ericksburg, and are said to be advancing toward Gordonsville. I will try to find opportunity to write to you from that place.

"Company Q" remains behind to nurse the sick, guard the camp, and "bring up the rear," in case of a sudden attack on the city while we are away.

May the angel guard camp around you, and us, and the city.

Your friend, B.

[For the enlightenment of the sons and daughters of the old Veterans, who, perhaps, may be curious to know about this Company Q," spoken of above, I will say that, in every body of soldiers, whether a single company or more, there are, nearly always, a few men, more or less, who are partially sick or ailing, or in some way disqualified for full and active duty; convalescents just out of the hospital; new recruits that have not been drilled; and some, maybe, who shirk and pretend to be sick; and, it is these who are classed as "Company Q." They are the unavailables, the ineffectives, those who cannot be counted upon to render aid or help, either in the hour of battle or in the performance of any very disagreeable duty. And while some of the very best and most reliable men are sometimes forced to be classed in this "company," it is not regarded as an altogether creditable parcel or body of soldiers to which they belong.

And, as I am trying to write a truthful history, I must say that the S. L. A. had, nearly all the time, an indefinite number of men, generally few, sometimes many, of this class. How far, at any time, any of these might properly have been called shirks, it is beyond my province to say, but I think not many. It was a hard matter to play off continually, or frequently, so as deceive officers, doctors, and comrades, too.]

LETTER TWENTIETH.

Gordonsville—Marching and counter-marching—The Stoneman raid—At Orange Courthouse—Scenery—Note.

ORANGE COURTHOUSE, VA.,
May 8, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—I take the first opportunity that I have had since our arrival in these parts, to write to you. Our Battalion, with many other forces, left Richmond on April 27th, and arrived at Gordonsville, over the C. & O. rail, at an early hour that night. The night was rainy, and, as we had no tents or shelter of any sort, we had rather a bad time of it until morning. But we had large fires, and some of the men managed to sleep a little.

Gordonsville is a long, straggling town, built up along the highway that has many angles and turns. It lies at the foot of the southwest hills, or mountains, a spur or outcrop of the Blue Ridge. As a railroad centre, it is a place of some importance, and there are a number of shops and other industrial enterprises, or rather there were, until the war closed some of them.

We tarried at Gordonsville but a day or two, since which time our Battalion has been moving almost constantly, marching and counter-marching from place to place, seldom remaining more than a day anywhere, but

hurrying from point to point, as the exigencies of the occasion, or the movements of the enemy, seemed to require. So far, we have not been brought in contact with the invaders, and have done no fighting. The 13th Virginia Cavalry, however, has been engaged once or twice within the past few days, and have brought in some prisoners. You know there are a great many Surry boys in that command. Both Company G and Company H of that Regiment, are from Surry.

We are told now that the enemy is falling back to his stronghold somewhere near the Rappahannock, and, of course, near the main body of Hooker's army. Stoneman, at the head of a large and formidable cavalry force, had attempted, by a circuitous flank movement, to get between General Lee's position and Richmond, and so destroy his communications and cripple his army. And it is said he came right near succeeding, in part, at least. For the very day we came up here, a part of his troops got within a mile or two of the railroad, and by a sudden dash, they might have cut the road, and perhaps have captured a part of us. Had Stoneman kept on with the vim he showed at first, he might have given a good deal of trouble, but he seemed soon to lose faith in his enterprise, and has withdrawn. Consequently we have had rest for several days.

We are now camped within a mile of the village of Orange Courthouse, reposing on a high ridge, with deep ravines on either side; in Orange, but not among oranges! And not much of anything else to eat in

sight. In fact, rations up here afford no suspicion of abundance and more to come. Those of the men who have any Confederate scrip left, manage, by tramping around a good deal, to buy buttermilk, vegetables, etc., and thus eke out the short supply of corn bread. So we are comparatively content and happy.

The scenery up here is varied, picturesque and beautiful. From our camp we have a fine and extended view of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the distance, and there are many delightful prospects all around us. This hilly country presents many elevated ridges and high knolls, fine for residences, and just the beau ideal positions for artillery to play upon an advancing army. But for a few things, I think I would love to live up here. And one of these is the formidable state of the roads, the clay, the endless beds of clay. It has rained several times recently, and the roads, unlike the varied scenery, are anything but beautiful. These red-clay roads are "just awful" after a rain. If it rains but a little, the surface gets so soap-like and slick that every step one makes he is likely to slide back two, and wind up by falling down prone into the mud. And if it rains much, the clay gets like mortar, only more tenacious, and every step you take, you stick fast in the mire or leave a shoe behind!

It is hard on the men's shoes, hard on the men, and as for the poor horses, they can barely drag the cannon through it at all. The guns and caissons have been

lightened of every disposable weight, but to little purpose. The mud encases the spokes and hubs until the wheels become huge plates of solid clay, and stops have to be made to shovel it off. I love Virginia, all of it. Yea!

> "I love thee next to heaven above,
> Home of my fathers—thee I love;
> And rail thy sland'rers as they will
> With all thy faults, I love thee still;"

but I am not intensely captivated with these red hills and this Orange county clay. I much prefer our own Tidewater, with its long stretches of sand, and level roads, and gravelly hills. There are no mountains down there, it is true, and but little of varied and picturesque scenery; and there is no red clay there, either—at least none like this clay up here. If there be anything in the world that "sticketh closer than a brother," undoubtedly it is this Orange county mire.

For awhile adieu, and peaceful dreams.

Your friend, B.

[Before the above letter had been written, several great battles had occurred between different parts of the two armies at Fredericksburg; General Jackson had executed his splendid and famous flank movement, and struck Hooker's vast army a blow, from which it recoiled in fatal confusion, and which gave another great victory to Lee's matchless army; and Stoneman, too

busy in aiding his chief in his retrograde across the river, found no opportunity to meddle further with Lee's communications with Richmond. There was, therefore, no further use for Colonel Rhett and his forces in Orange, and he was free to return. It was deemed advisable, however, to give the horses a good rest before the backward march was undertaken.

As I am writing this only for my immediate comrades and their friends, and not for a critical public, I feel that I need make no excuse for having employed the word "raid" at the head of this letter. It is not altogether a well-established word for grave history. It carries the idea of a predatory incursion, for the purpose of robbing and devastating a country, rather than approved warfare; and perhaps General Stoneman would object to the implication that he was bent on robbery. The term is a Scotticism, used by Sir Walter Scott in his admirable writings, but hardly yet sufficiently anglicized for use in grave composition.

But perhaps I have more need to apologize for the occasional use, in the course of these letters, of such decidedly rude expressions as "just awful," and some others. They were found in the original letters, and I did not deem it of importance enough to change them. But in every such case I have used the marks of quotation, to show that they are not well approved words.

The account that is given of the bad state of the roads, as we found them in the Piedmont country in

May, 1863, is no exaggeration. In a country where stones seem to grow like bumps of stubbornness on every hillside and in every valley, it is a wonder that some of them had not been utilized a century ago in making hard roads. Good roads, if they had been general throughout Virginia, might have done something to save the Confederacy from final overthrow. The roads of Orange county were no worse than those of the other hilly districts. Bad roads cost the Confederacy millions.]

LETTER TWENTY-FIRST.

Conflicting reports—Wounded men and prisoners—Death of General Jackson—Honoring the remains—Orders to return—Note.

ORANGE COURTHOUSE, VA.,
May 14, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—There are no newspapers circulating in the army up here, and nothing by which to form a definite idea of what is going on elsewhere, and the rumors and reports that we get from time to time are extremely conflicting and untrustworthy. First, we heard that Stuart's cavalry had been defeated by Stoneman's forces, and next we heard that Stuart had resigned. Then we were told that Stonewall Jackson had been wounded, and that Stuart had been placed in command of Jackson's corps. Then we heard that the Federals had captured Fredericksburg, and got in between Lee and Richmond, and that Lee was retiring toward Louisa Courthouse. And so, between one report and another, we did not know what to depend on. That a great battle had been fought, we felt sure, but of what the issue had been we were kept in profound ignorance for several days.

But the passing of many trains, conveying wounded men and prisoners, also captured arms and supplies, convinced us that the tide of battle had once more

turned in our favor. The prisoners that came by this route, were captured mainly by Stuart's forces and the daring Mosby. Then we began to receive more definite accounts of Jackson's charge on Hooker's right flank, and that Jackson had been wounded.

But we were not prepared for the sad news that General Jackson had died of his wounds! Stonewall Jackson dead! The words were too distressing to be entertained! But the arrival of orders for a section of our Battery to proceed to Gordonsville, for the purpose of firing a salute to the remains as they were being conveyed to their last resting-place, put an end to all doubt. It was indeed too true. The great chieftain, General Thomas J. Jackson, had been severely wounded near Chancellorsville on May 2d, and had died near Guiney's Station on the 10th.

As the train bearing his remains approached the station at Gordonsville, the section of our Battery that had been detailed for the purpose, discharged its guns in honor of the dead hero. It was a sad duty the boys had to perform. All felt and knew that a great leader among men had fallen—felt that our cause had sustained an irreparable loss—and that his place could never be entirely filled.

The sad event has occasioned great gloom throughout our army, and over all of the Confederacy. We have many able generals, but none just like Stonewall Jackson. In his fall I believe that we lose even more than

the fall of Richmond would be. May the God of battles defend our cause, and order the event to our good.

"Let us praise Him for victories past;
Let us trust Him for all that's to come."

On yesterday afternoon, the 13th, orders were received for our return to Richmond, and I am writing this early this morning, before we take our departure. Accordingly, all the forces of Colonel Rhett's Command are about to take up the line of march, on the return trip. We will bid adieu to Orange, and Orange county mud, and proceed by easy stages via Gordonsville and Louisa Courthouse, and on through Hanover.

"The bright May morning's come again,
With balmy airs and showers,
And through the wood, and in the glen,
Is borne the breath of flowers."

When you approach the throne of grace, think of the soldier boys.

Your friend, B.

[It is out of the province of this humble history to speak extendedly of General Stonewall Jackson. Our command was in another part of the army, and we saw nothing of him. But we heard much. From the time he struck McClellan's right flank at Mechanicsville, on that bright 26th of June, 1862, up to that glorious but too fatal day at Chancellorsville, we had heard

many things of "Stonewall Jackson's way" of marching, and fighting, and defeating the enemy. And every man of the S. L. A. had learned to love him. And when he fell, we all felt and knew that it was an irreparable blow for the South. Sadness settled upon our camp and upon the hearts of the men. They spoke of his death with bated breath, and wondered why he had been taken from us in the way and manner that he had. Such a splendid victory! Such an untimely and disastrous fall! Even to this day, I cannot see the reason for it.]

LETTER TWENTY-SECOND.

The plains of Virginia—Condition of agriculture—A pen sketch of Colonel Rhett—Arrival at Richmond—A new camp—Note.

CAMP LETCHER, VA.,
May 28, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—The section of the State over which we passed, on our return route, is a level plain, known as the plains of Virginia. The scenery is varied, at times almost picturesque, and one notable feature in the landscape for several miles after leaving the mountain country, is the presence of large isolated bowlders, or rocks, scattered about, one or two at a place, over the fields. Some of them are almost as large as a house, and all are too large to be moved by ordinary mechanical appliances, hence they have to remain where they lie. Such rocks, similarly placed, would be a notable feature for our Tidewater land.

The water of the plains is excellent, and there are many fine springs and small brooks and streams. And there is gold there, too, so they say, but I did not have time to look for any. Agriculture seemed to be in a depleted condition. There were some good fields of corn and wheat, and some cattle and sheep grazing in well-enclosed pastures. But many fields and farms lie fallow, and are growing up in bushes, and quite often

the fences and buildings manifest neglect and the absence of labor. Slaves, and in some cases, white men, were at work in some of the fields. But an air of abandonment, painful to look upon, seems to rest over all the country.

Yet, in comparison with the Peninsula counties, it is still a fair and goodly land. There are no blackened ruins, marking the despoiler's path, and the people have not been driven from their homes to seek refuge in other parts. The churches and mills remain, and the appliances of agriculture are there yet, and the old men and the boys may labor in hope and peace. With its productive soil, and a climate almost beau ideal for health, it is one of the most desirable parts of the Old Dominion.

Nothing of particular interest occurred on the march back—nothing that needs to be noted, save, perhaps, the presence of vast clouds of dust, that clung to the army, as it moved onward, in long lines of stifling misery. The volume of dust that is raised by an army, tramping slowly onward over a dry road, is a phenomenon. From front to rear of the line, the impalpable earth-powder, the floating soil-spray, winds its slow coils around everything. It penetrates everywhere, into the clothing and accoutrements, into the eyes and lungs of man and beast, into everything. It settles upon the foliage of all the trees, and floats off right and left over field and crops. There is no escaping it. The soldier has to trudge on in the moving wave, half suffocated, half

blinded. How welcome, at such times, is a shower of rain, to lay the soil-demon low. Though it is seldom mentioned, and but little thought of, outside of army circles, one of the greatest discomforts of the soldier's life, and one of the severest tests of his physical endurance, is, undoubtedly, the great dust-clouds that hang over and envelope a moving army on a dry, hot day. It has to be seen and experienced to be thoroughly understood. We met with a good deal of this sort of misery on our march back here.

I had frequent opportunity, on the return, to see and note our commanding officer, Colonel Rhett. Once or twice he spoke to me, and seemed desirous of talking, though I was only a private, trudging along in the dust, and he on horseback. He asked some questions about the crops, and other things, and his manner was kind and affable. He is regarded by many in his command as a stern man and a severe officer, but I saw nothing like it. I think he has a kindly heart, though it may be concealed under a rough and somewhat repellant exterior. That he will fight the enemy, when he meets him, I have no doubt. He is from the Palmetto State, and the Palmetto soldiers all fight. I have come to like him.

We reached Richmond yesterday, the 27th, and our camp is now in a fine oak grove near the western limits of the city, and near the Brook Turnpike, that leads out of the town into the old "mountain road" through

Hanover, over which we lately marched. We are also quite near to the fair grounds usually occupied by the State Agricultural Fair during its annual exhibitions in times of peace, but now used as a conscript camp for the State conscripts. It is called Camp Lee. Our own camp has been named Camp Letcher, for the Governor of Virginia, and the grove is large enough for all the three Companies of the Battalion.

"The mellow eve is gliding
Serenely down the west;
So, every care subsiding,
My soul would sink to rest."

Pray for our country, for the armies, and for me, and read the twenty-third Psalm.

Your friend, B.

[The reference in this letter to the clouds of dust that always attend a body of soldiers on the march during a dry time, while it will recall to the minds of the Veterans one of the most disagreeable attendants of their soldier life, will also serve to inform the children and grandchildren of the post-war times of a matter that, very likely, they would never think about in reading the history of what their fathers endured in the war between the States.

The long marches—and all armies have to make long marches at times—the long marches have four repellant features, namely, weariness, footsoreness,

thirst and dust. Weariness and footsoreness are inseparable attendants on all marches, whether performed in summer or in winter. In addition to these, thirst and dust are unavoidable in summer time. A rain while an army is moving in summer, brings relief and is always welcome. But the rain, unfortunately, seldom occurs just at the time needed.

The sufferings that armies experience at times from thirst and dust are often intolerable. An army on the march cannot escape the dust. It is a natural result of the movement of any body of troops over a dry and sandy road. The men cannot leave the ranks and get out of it. They have to keep in it all the time. And when to the dust are added thirst, footsoreness, and weariness, the soldier's lot is indeed severe and trying to the utmost—is truly and emphatically a hard and bitter experience. No one but an old Veteran who has gone through it all time and again, can form any adequate idea of the depressing nature of these things. I thought it proper to emphasize this fact, that the younger generations, whose ideas of war are mostly of the romantic cast, might be the better prepared to understand something of its true bitterness.]

LETTER TWENTY-THIRD.

All quiet on the James—Drilling and guard duty—Church and theatre—Negro raiders—Note.

CAMP LETCHER, VA.,
June 15, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—All is quiet along the James and around the Capital of the Confederacy at this writing. We seem to be settling down to a tranquil summer here. But we hear that General Lee, with a recruited army, is moving forward into Northern Virginia. After the mighty struggle at Fredericksburg, "fighting Joe," who got the worst of the fight, has been falling back, and General Lee is assuming the offensive. Whether he will go beyond the Potomac again this summer, as he did last, has not yet reached the ear of the private in these parts. I hope, however, there will be no further movement that would have the appearance of an invasion of Northern soil. Southern soldiers are fighting for this very thing, more than anything else, namely, to resist invasion, invasion of their native land and soil, and if our own army should turn about and become the invader of the North, I believe it would tend to unite that people more firmly and lead them to fight us harder than ever. This is a private's view

of the matter, and it may be all wrong. But I, for one, would prefer to fight at home. I think I could strike harder here.

Our drilling field is the old Fair Grounds, now Camp Lee, where our Battalion drills once or twice daily. This, and guard duty, are about all we have to occupy our time, except the usual routine of camp life. Sometimes the boys engage in athletic sports, and there is the usual "broom day" once weekly to occupy a part of our time, that often will hang heavy, for lack of regular and continued employment. Drilling and guard duty are commonly irksome employments, but the men manage to get through them without feeling that they are martyrs on account of them.

Our camp is located very conveniently to the city for attending church, theatre, etc., and the men get "permits" almost daily for attending the one or the other. Many attend the different churches, especially the Clay Street Methodist Episcopal, where a revival has been in progress for sometime, and where several of the men have made a profession of religion. Others visit the Trinity Methodist Episcopal, where that able minister, Rev. John E. Edwards, is the pastor. I have heard him preach, and regard him as an earnest, zealous, devoted man of God, who is endeavoring to do all the good he can. I have been reading his "Life of the Rev. John Wesley Childs," of the Virginia Conference, and admire the portrayal of Christian character therein exhibited.

The new Richmond Theatre, finished since the war began, has also been drawing some of our men. I have attended on several occasions, and have witnessed Scott's "Lady of the Lake," also "Cleopatra," "Captain Kidd," and other pieces. But I take no special interest in the plays. I have some doubts as to the propriety of permitting the play-house to be open at times like these. When we reflect upon the great struggle that we are engaged in, and the frequent reverses that our arms have sustained, and also come to think of the hard lot of our soldiers, and the many deaths that are constantly taking place in the hospital and on the battle-field, it does seem to me that such diversion as the theatre offers us should be prohibited. It looks very much like Nero fiddling while Rome is burning. I wonder that the public sentiment of the city permits the theatre to run while the country is engaged in a bitter and terrible war.

And besides, there are a number of strong, able-looking men belonging to the troupe, who, it seems to me, might be doing better service if assigned to a wider stage, and made to do some acting pro bono publico, for the country at large. They have one man there, who, they say, ran the blockade from the North to join the company. If he would go and "join the cavalry," I think he would deserve and share a better opinion on the part of some. Who knows that he is not a spy, paid to report such things as may be of importance

for the other side to know? Some fine day before long, he may depart to "run the blockade" back again to whence he came.

How can we pray for and trust God's blessing to rest upon this country, when there are so many inconsistencies and sins lying at our door? With our hospitals filled with the sick, wounded and dying—with the crepe displayed in so many homes—what room or place is there in our lives for the inane and silly amusements of an irreligious drama?

It is a source of grief to the men of the S. L. A. that several bands of lawless freebooters, composed of runaway negroes and worthless white men, have recently begun to visit and pillage in the counties of Isle of Wight and Surry. It makes the blood almost to boil within us, to think that our kindred and friends at home have tamely to submit to and endure the insult, abuse, and wrong that come of such thieves, without any prospect of redress or retaliation. Perhaps it is but litle more than we might expect of a certain class of slaves, let loose from bondage, without any restraining hand to control them. But that there are any white men, native to the soil, and living here among our people all their lives, and receiving favors from many of them on many an occasion, who could descend to an abyss so low and despicable, is more than I could believe. Great God! to what depths will not mortal man plunge, when the demon of unholiness and greed gets possession of

his heart! White men?—white traitors! dogs! vampires! with hearts blacker than the slaves with whom they associate, and souls more repulsive than the hideous daughters of Phorcus and Ceto! What infamy will rest upon their names, when this bitter tragedy is played!

Your friend, B.

[The intention has been strong with me from the beginning of this history, to devote a page somewhere in the work to an exposé of the conduct of a few white fiends in our midst, who played the despicable role of traitors, informers, freebooters and thieves, during the closing years of the war, in the section where the men of the S. L. A. were born and raised. But, on reading over the letters that I had written during the war, I discovered that I had already spoken of them in terms as strong as respect for my readers would permit. I have no desire to devote to them any further attention, except to say that I could give the *names* of several of them, were I called upon. It would be but simple justice to every old Veteran to name them here, in order that posterity might know who among our own people were true, and who were false, to the STARS and BARS, and the Cause we espoused, but I forbear. I would not have these pages soiled with the titles of beings so vile and loathsome.]

LETTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

The battle cloud moving northward—Advancing from the York—On the Chickahominy—Scenery and conditions—Note.

NEW BRIDGE, VA.,
July 5, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—General Lee has crossed the Potomac, and is reported to be advancing northward into Pennsylvania. And there are rumors and accounts of several great battles having been fought by different divisions of his army, but as I have seen none of the daily papers since we came here, I am uncertain whether a general battle has taken place or not. Of course, having made an advance movement into the enemy's country, some terrible fighting may be expected. If our army should again prove victorious, as it has done in the past, it may lead to an early peace between the two sections. Let us hope that such will indeed be the result of this advance.

But the Federals, probably to prevent any re-enforcements being sent to Lee from this section, or possibly because they supposed our Capital to be but weakly guarded now, have been making demonstrations of an advance by the way of the York river. Many transports have been seen lately on that river by our pickets and scouts, and a large force has been set ashore, and it appears to be moving this way.

Accordingly, to meet the advance, nearly all the available troops about the city have been posted at the various crossings of the Chickahominy, from the Long Bridge, the lowest fordable place above tidewater, to the New Bridge, a few miles from the city. Lightfoot's Battalion has, consequently, been broken up, for the time being, one company or section having been sent to one point, and another company to another point. Our Company was directed to hold a position at the New Bridge, on the road leading out to Cold Harbor, in Hanover. And at this place the S. L. A., with an infantry support, are now stationed, to dispute the further advance of any Blue Coats that may come this way. Our post is about ten miles east of Richmond, and our line of forces extend at least ten miles further down the river. Our guns are posted to rake the bridge, and the hills beyond, and we have a broad, open field before us, and a fine view of the country on the opposite, or Hanover, side of the little stream.

It being summer time, and, as was supposed, only for a temporary bivouac, we brought no tents with us, and have been finding shelter from the dews of night under the few forest trees that the armies of a year ago chanced to leave untouched. I was so fortunate, as I supposed, as to find good shelter under a dense-foliaged apple tree, and I would have done nicely there, and slept well, I think, but for the millions of mosquitoes that swarmed about me and sang their ditties, and made sleep impossible. I think the flats

of the Chickahominy must be the premium breeding-place for mosquitoes. After awhile, I enveloped myself as completely as possible in my only blanket, and told them to bite on.

The country adjacent the New Bridge is, to a smart extent, pleasing and picturesque to the view. The hills and ridges on the Hanover side of the stream are elevated and, were they under a good state of cultivation, would be called beautiful. The scenery and conditions here now are quite different from what they were a year ago. Then all this section, from Mechanicsville to Malvern Hill, was the theatre of a mighty struggle between two great and powerful armies, and fire and war swept along here like an angry sea. Nature has obliterated many of the signs of that terrible strife, but many evidences of battle and despoliation yet remain—long lines of earthworks, blackened ruins of buildings, mills and property, lonely chimneys, the sole remains of former homes, forest trees torn and scarred by bullet and shell, and the shallow graves, where the dead were hastily interred.

There are no crops and no evidences of life. Few families remain, and the few that are here, move about in a listless sort of way. They have no property, and it is a wonder how they manage to live here at all. There are two places where one can realize something of the real horrors of war—the hospital, where the wounded lie, and the neighborhood where a battle has been

fought. The whole Virginia Peninsula, from Yorktown to Richmond, is, to a greater or less extent, one continuous scene of desolation.

Thankful indeed should you be, my friend, that the country south of the James has escaped the despoiling hand of the war-fiend.

Your friend, B.

[It was indeed a most fortunate circumstance for the people in the counties south of the James river, that, from the beginning to the close of the war, that whole section of the State escaped, almost entirely, the burning and destruction of private property, and the interruptions, losses, and inconveniences arising from the presence of large armies. The people were not forced to leave their homes, the avocations of industry were not entirely interrupted, and, except in a few minor instances, property was not destroyed, as it was where the great army of invaders swept along. Especially did the counties of Surry, Isle of Wight and Southampton, from whence the Light Artillery was chiefly made up, pass through the period of the war almost untouched by fire and invasion. It was the source of great thankfulness to the men of the S. L. A. that it fell not to their lot to look upon burned and desolated homes, fields entrenched and ditched, and timber destroyed, on their return to their homes.

In their marches over the State, the soldiers from the Southside counties had witnessed the ruin and de-

vastation that invariably followed wherever a Federal army had been. They had seen and heard how some of the leaders of invasion had boasted that they had left nothing behind them but misery. They had seen how old men, women and children had been robbed of the comforts and common needs of life, solely to gratify the malice or fiendishness of a heartless foe. And while they beheld these things, they had felt a pang of fear for their own homes, a painful apprehension that the like despoliation and misery would meet their gaze when they returned to the scenes of their own childhood. Truly, we of these counties have much to be thankful for, that the hand of war fell so lightly upon us, comparatively with other sections—that the besom of ruin swept so tenderly here—that homes and hearthstones escaped desecration. Let us thank God for it all, and cling to these homes all the more lovingly.]

LETTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

Return into camp—Confederate reverses—Hope for us yet—Our cause just—Why we sometimes fail—Conscripts and skulkers—Note.

CAMP LETCHER, VA.,
July 14, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—After spending a week in our bivouac at New Bridge, and no enemy appearing to claim our attention, we left the sad scenes of the Chickahominy, and the pestilent mosquitoes, and returned to our pleasant camp at this place. All is serene again about the Capital, and along the York and the James, and generally so all over the State.

But I learn that it is far from being so in other parts of the country, particularly in Pennsylvania and Mississippi. General Lee's army, after fighting several hard battles, in which they were uniformly successful, met with a severe repulse on July 3d, and is now slowly retiring, and, by this time, has re-crossed the Potomac. In the reverse of the 3d, it was General Pickett's Division that sustained the burden of the repulse, meeting with very heavy loss in killed and wounded. The 3d Virginia Infantry, to which, you know, the S. L. A. was attached in 1861, is in that Division, and was in the charge made by General Pickett's command. I hear their loss was very great. Colonel A. D. Calcott, who

led the Regiment in the charge, was killed. It turned out to be a severe disaster, the heaviest, it is said, that General Lee's army has yet met with. But it was only a repulse. There was no confusion, no panic, in any other part of the army, on account of it. General Lee stood and offered battle the next day, but the challenge was not accepted. He then retired leisurely toward Virginia.

But it was at Vicksburg, Miss., that the worst disaster, perhaps, of the whole war has befallen our arms. After days and weeks of battle and siege, that stronghold has been given up to the enemy, the Mississippi is open to the Federal fleet from end to end, and the territory of the Confederacy has been rent in twain. The States west of the Mississippi are now isolated from the remainder of the Confederacy.

These two great reverses, happening at the same time, have naturally cast a gloom over all the country. The loss at Vicksburg was particularly heavy in material and men, to say nothing of the place as a stronghold and connecting link between the two parts of the Confederacy. Some think it was a fatal blow.

But, though our losses have been great, there is yet hope for us. The spirit and courage of the army have not been broken. Let us fight them hereafter on our own soil. Our cause is just, and so long as a single invader remains to disturb us, we ought to, we must, fight them. Though the private soldier feels and knows

that some one in authority has been guilty of blundering, there remains a determined feeling "to fight them to the last ditch."

May it not be that these reverses are chastisements, sent upon our country as a rebuke for the sins of the nation? I have thought all along that God would, in some way, punish us for the flagrant and causeless disregard of the sanctity of the Sabbath day. May the afflictions already sent suffice to recall all in authority to a sense of our sins, and produce a speedy reformation and return to duty. But I have no heart to speak further of the deplorable state of things that confronts us.

The buildings on the Fair Grounds (Camp Lee), where we drill, are being used as a camp of instruction for the State conscripts, or drafted men, who have been forced into service. There they are drilled and trained until assigned to some command. It is whispered around that the experiences of a conscript at Camp Lee are not altogether pleasant. Doubtless many a man will retain a vivid recollection of the place to his dying day. Well, they should have gone out earlier, and thus escaped the den. But there are men who would rather suffer martyrdom at Camp Lee than fill an honorable place in the line of battle. Poor fellows! They are to be pitied.

Since the late reverses, the enrolling officers will become busier and more energetic than ever, and large additions to the conscript camp may be expected. The

skulkers and hiders at home may not have altogether an easy time of it, making baskets and mending shoes. They had better come out of the woods, like honorable men, and give themselves up. Yet no one thinks much of the bush-hiders, as material for making good and efficient soldiers. And, perhaps, after all, they had as well be let alone, and allowed to remain in hiding. They count for little anywhere.

Hoping these dark clouds will soon roll away and victory be ours again—

Your friend, B.

[Lest the sons and daughters should entertain wrong impressions concerning the terms "conscript" and "skulkers," let me offer here an explanation. The words do not apply to one and the same class of men, but to different sets. Conscripts were those who, not having gone into the service voluntarily, were drafted and sent on to some place of instruction and training, like that at Camp Lee, in Richmond. No disgrace or reproach should attach to any one who was conscripted, unless otherwise he attempted to evade the call and escape from duty. All could not volunteer at first, and there were some men to whom military service was never a fit and useful place. They would have been of more benefit to the State if they had been permitted to remain at home as farmers, laborers or mechanics. Let no one, then, attach any discreditable meaning to the term "conscript." The word itself is one of respect.

The Latin, conscriptus, from conscribo, to enroll, means "written, enrolled," and was applied to the body of senators of Rome, who were termed conscript fathers because their names were written in the register of the senate.

The other term, "skulkers," is meant to apply to those men—there were a few such—who declined to go into military service at all, and to escape arrest, went into some place of concealment, and remained hid from public observation until it became safe for them to appear openly. The skulker is one who will not fight. The deserter is one, who, having been in the service, deserts his command, and either skulks at home or goes to the enemy. The traitor is one who deserts his post, violates his allegiance to his command or country, and betrays it to the enemy. The last deserves the deepest contempt. The skulker is to be despised. A traitor ought to be scorned and ostracized. The skulker deserves to lose caste among all honorable men. But he cannot be regarded as an enemy. He is simply a shirk. He does not perform a public trust, or duty, but he betrays no one, and does not aid the enemy.]

LETTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

Hanging of Kellogg, the spy—Revivals—Furloughs—Health of the Company—Books—Note.

CAMP LETCHER, VA.,
Aug. 3, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—I was present, on Friday afternoon, at the hanging of Kellogg, the spy, who was captured a year ago at Island No. 10, in the Mississippi river. He was executed at Camp Lee, on the grounds where we drill daily. He manifested intrepid resolution, was perfectly calm, conversed freely and pleasantly with his guard, and met death with great firmness. At the given signal the trap fell, and the body swung in mid-air. A few convulsive movements passed over his frame, and then the body relaxed, and all was over. Such was the fate of Kellogg, the spy. But what is the death of one man, when thousands fall in a single battle? Truly, war has many repellant phases, many horrors, many tragedies, and there are many secret foes and many betrayals. And when or what the end, no man knoweth.

From these sad topics, I gladly turn to a subject more agreeable—to the revivals of religion that are taking place in the city and throughout the army. There seems to be a great outpouring of the Spirit upon our people everywhere, at home, among the women, children

and aged men, and in all divisions of the army. At Clay Street M. E. church, in Richmond, where our men attend most regularly, because the church is so near to our Camp, a great revival has been sometime in progress, and several of my comrades have gone forward and accepted Christ as their Saviour. The congregation at that church welcome the soldiers to their meetings most heartily, and work among them, and urge them with earnestness and zeal to accept the overtures of grace now, while they may. In consequence of these things, a great religious fervor pervades our Company, and the pious members talk freely to their unconverted comrades on the subject of religion, and urge them to attend the meetings and read the religious tracts and papers that are offered them.

The newspapers of the day contain glowing accounts of the revival spirit, and spread of religion in the Army of Northern Virginia, and in the armies in Tennessee and at other points. There is a great awakening. God is visiting our land with the offers of His grace; and the future historian, when he comes to write up the record of this war, will leave the story but partly told if he fails to relate how the spirit of religion, and consecration to Christ, swept through the Southern armies and churches in 1863. The narrative, if given in truthfulness and completeness, will form one of the most interesting chapters in the history of these times.

As the place where the several denominational depositories of religious reading have their location, and

where tracts, books, Testaments and religious papers are printed and kept for gratuitous circulation, the city of Richmond may be regarded as the head and centre of this glorious revival. May the good cause continue to increase and spread until *every* man in all the armies, both officers and privates, shall accept Christ as his Saviour and King.

The various commands around this city are being allowed furloughs at the rate of four to a Company at the same time, and some of the men have already secured theirs, and have visited their homes and have returned. Four are now absent at home.

This concession is a great boon to our men, who have been away from their homes so long, and the privilege of visiting friends and kindred once more is eagerly sought by the men. But as the names are taken in alphabetical order, those whose names are low down on the list are rather glum, fearing that the order will be revoked before their time comes.

The health of the Company is very good, and has been all the year. There are only three or four men in the hospital now, and, I believe, not a single case in camp. We have had but one death since the spring and early summer of last year, when our losses by death were heavy. One man—Isaac G. Jones—has lately been discharged from service on account of disability, and has returned home. His disease was

phthisis pulmonalis, and he had been in hospital half the time since he joined the Company in 1861. He was an original member.

Another man—William Crocker, of Isle of Wight—has also been returned home, for inefficiency. Our 4th Corporal, Samuel A. Moody, has recently died, while at home on furlough. He was a young and promising soldier, and his death is much lamented.

Our location so near the city, and the privilege of procuring permits almost daily, offer the boys opportunity of buying plenty of books to read, and there are now in camp books enough to form a considerable library. But books, of course, are a prohibited article for a soldier on the march. Nothing but articles of absolute necessity are allowed him then, and these darling books will have to remain behind when we move again.

Good-by, and pray for the soldiers.

Your friend, B.

[The two men named in this letter as having been discharged from service, and the one that died, cover, I believe, the entire loss of the Company for the year 1863. But the gain, by new recruits, during the year was considerable, and was, as far as I have been able to determine, as follows:

George W. Armistead, from Richmond, mathematician, transferred to the navy in 1864; Joseph W.

Bailey, from Southampton, a brother of James T. Bailey; Decatur Barlow and Junius H. Barlow, brothers, from Isle of Wight; Jacob E. Bell, from Surry, brother of Corporal John H. Bell; William Joe Bell, from Surry; Franklin N. Carrington and William H. Elliott, from Charlotte county; Edward T. Edwards, from Surry; R. Fuller Farrar, from Henrico county; J. Thomas Harris, from Surry, brother of William E. Harris, who came to us in 1862; Beverly W. Irving, from Alexandria, Va.; Edward W. Jones, from Richmond; Julian H. Judkins, from Isle of Wight; James T. Latimer, from Isle of Wight; J. Thomas Little, also from Isle of Wight, brother of Luther J. Little and William H. Little, both from the same county; James J. Lewis, from Nansemond; James M. Lewis, from Isle of Wight; Everett H. McGuriman, from Surry; Marion Messersmith, from Baltimore, transferred to Surry Cavalry in 1864; William H. Olliver, from Surry; Henry Peters, from Surry; Charles C. Richardson, from Sussex; C. Travis Savedge and Franklin R. Seward, from Surry; John F. Scott, from Isle of Wight; Malory Shields, from Hampton, Va.; W. Henry Turner, from Isle of Wight; Thomas H. Tynes, from Surry, who was transferred to us from the Jamestown Heavy Artillery, Captain Harrison's Company; and Thomas Williams, of Surry. A total of 30, making the net gain of the S. L. A. for the year 1863, 27 men.

The story of the rise and spread of religion in the armies of the South forms a highly interesting, en-

couraging and instructive part of the history of those times. For a general and pretty full account of it, as relating more especially to the Army of Northern Virginia, see Dr. J. William Jones's splendid volume, "Christ in the Camp."

But I cannot but feel that a fuller record should, long ago, have appeared concerning the outpouring of the same blessing in the other large armies of the South. Even as relates alone to the S. L. A., I am conscious that a book of no small size would be needed to tell of all that was done to promote religion and gain converts to Christ, by the pious among our own men, and of all the conversions that took place from our ranks, in the religious meetings around us. Only the final day will reveal all the good that was accomplished in these revivals. As one consequence, many of the vices that went into the armies at first, such as cursing, obscene talking and card-playing, were laid aside.]

LETTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

Guardian angels—September days in camp—Hard times in Surry—But worse in other parts—Courage, and better times—Note.

CAMP LETCHER, VA.,
Sept. 15, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—Do you believe in the doctrine of guardian angels? I do, most implicitly. And I tell you, that, for a poor soldier, exposed to so many dangers, and liable to be called upon to face death at any time, it is a most comforting and strengthening belief. I think the Bible reveals the truth of this faith very clearly. I cannot now go into particulars, but if you will turn to Hebrews i: 14, and by the reference notes there found, trace out the kindred passages, you will have my Bible authority for this encouraging doctrine.

And I tell you it *is* highly encouraging. It is comforting to think, when dangers gather about us, that there are wiser and stronger beings near, though invisible to mortal eye, whose gentle and silent ministrations are constantly between us and danger. No sparrow falleth without our heavenly Father's notice. And while I know that sparrows (men) do fall, yet I know they *cannot* unless He permits it. And I tell you that, in battle, I commit myself into God's hand, and ask

that my guardian angels defend me. Is this puerile? Is it weak? In number 34 of the Psalter we read:

> "His angels camp around to guard,
> And rescue them that fear the Lord."

I love to think that heaven has given me an angel, to guard my pathway.

To-day is one of the brightest and sunniest of this bright and sweet autumnal month. The woods have put on their "sear and yellow robe," but the days are warm and splendid, the sky, intensely blue, smiles through a dry and riant atmosphere, and all around me is loveliness—all, but these reminders that a cruel and bloody war is now in progress.

These scenes must change soon. Stern winter, with snow and sleet, will come shortly; and want and, in many cases, suffering, is already abroad in our land and in our homes. It gives me pain to hear that times are getting hard in Surry, that our friends at home must soon experience the pinchings of want. It makes it doubly hard for the soldier in camp to be content, when he knows that friends at home are in need of the necessaries, to say nothing of the comforts, of life.

And, from various acounts that reach me, the condition of things is worse in other parts than it is in Surry. What the result is to be, no one can foresee. But there is need of great courage, invincible resolution, unfaltering faith. So far, I believe, the private

soldier is yet resolute, and determined to stand it out to the end, while hoping that the end may be near, and a brighter day close at hand.

And when that better day comes indeed, and the soldiers are all back at their dear old homes once more, how thankful all will be, and how interesting it will be to hear them tell of these times that are now passing—hear them recount the trials and tribulations of the war, of their marches and counter-marches, of battle and blood and wounds, all freely endured for the sake of those same dear homes and firesides. Then the faith in the guardian angels will be stronger than ever. And each return of the bright September days will be welcomed with tenderer heart, because of the memory of the days of like beauty that they whiled away beneath war's rude banner, under the STARS and BARS of their loved Southland.

In all dangers and trials, ever

Your friend, B.

[This short letter, though containing too much of a personal nature, will serve to show how affairs at home, as well as in the camp, were gradually growing harder—how poverty was slowly, but surely, strengthening its coils and testing the courage and endurance of all. As the months sped by, and war continued to ply its horrid trade, labor deserted the fields, and there was less and less produced, till scarcely enough was left to feed the women and children at home. Added to this, but little

money was circulating, and that little—Confederate script only—was well-nigh worthless. It possessed no purchasing value, or scarcely none. And though it had been as good as gold, no one had much of anything to sell. Stores were closed. Flour, sugar, coffee, bacon and, in many cases, even salt, were not to be had. It was a time of need, of trial, of suffering.

But the courage and resolution of the soldier were unabated. The invader's heel was on his native soil. His fleets were blockading every Southern port, and preventing the import of foreign goods, of the very necessaries of life. The slaves had been lured or stolen from their masters, and the plow was idle on the farms. But the Southern soldier knew he could whip the Northern hirelings, two to one, any day that he could meet them in a fair contest—knew that he had done so on a hundred battle-fields. He did not fear to meet the Northern foe. He only asked of his Government food to fight upon, and sustenance and protection for the wife and bairns at home while he was away.

Could the civil government have provided for the home people, as it was in duty bound to do, and as it did faithfully try to do—and could the soldiers in the field have been properly fed and clothed, there would have been no complaint or repining, and the war would have been carried to a successful issue. The disasters that had attended our arms in 1863 only intensified and increased the poverty and distress that were becoming manifest everywhere. But these losses could have been overcome.]

LETTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

Winter quarters again—Rations—Small-pox—A fire—The city by moonlight—"All quiet along the James"—Confederate Congress—Note.

CAMP SCHERMERHORN, VA.,
Dec. 10, 1863.

My Dear Friend:—Camp Letcher is deserted now. Lightfoot's Battalion has gone from it. The place where the S. L. A. had passed a quiet and comparatively pleasant summer, is now silent. No drill, no reveille, no assembly, no tattoo, no military parade or bustle, disturb now the nearby dwellers of that fair grove. The soldier has left it, and the owner thereof may take comfort that the most of the goodly trees—but not all of them—are again in his keeping.

We are in winter quarters again, a brand-new place, all in the woods, never before disturbed by a military band. The three Companies of the Battalion are a little apart, each from the others, and we have plenty of room. And there is plenty of wood here, too, so we will not freeze. The Colonel's headquarters, the hospital, etc., are near our camp. The land is owned by a Mr. Schermerhorn, and the Camp has been named for him. The men have built log cabins for themselves, and stalls for the horses, of which there are 64 belonging

to the Battery and officers, besides 12 mules, for the commissary and feed-wagons. It requires a deal of forage for all these head of teams.

The whole Camp is surrounded by woodland, which will break off the winds of winter, and, altogether we are quite comportably situated, and may pass the season pleasantly enough, if permitted to stay here. But this, of course, is as uncertain as next year's crop of beans. We may not stay here a week longer. But the men are not borrowing any trouble, on account of any contingencies that may arise. We are in "for better or for worse," and

> Let the war wax and wane as it will,
> We'll be gay and happy, happy still.

The men are singing their songs, and having their fun, just as if everything were as lovely as a garden of roses all the land over. Joe Kea, incorrigible tease, is fretting Tom the fiddler nearly to his death; "Commodore" keeps his crow, has his buttermilk, and simmers his pea-porridge; and Sergeant Pond and his tent-mates—or rather, cabin-mates—have their nightly songs of prayer and praise, just as they did a year ago over at Camp Roper, when "Scotland was a-burning." But we hear nothing of Scotland this time. That little fellow with the bucket of water put the fire out.

Were it not for the lamentable thinness and shortness of the ration crop this winter, we would not have very much to annoy us, or cause us anxiety. It must have

been a bad season last summer, for both the meal and the beef are number three, short. The late recruits, of whom there are a few, look on with apprehension, and turn away from the poor fare in disgust. But the Veterans tell them it is no use to sulk, they will have to come to it. But for an occasional box from home, some of the men would fare badly indeed. There is yet a little to spare at the homes of some of the men.

I hear that small-pox has broken out in the city and may become general. Some of Lightfoot's command have it. In consequence thereof, orders have been made rigid about visiting town. The men are not allowed to go anywhere, except on a detail, to perform a duty. There are a few men, however, of the S. L. A. Camp who often disregard orders. These go into town several times a week.

The men of the Battalion were called upon, a few days since, to assist in removing the household goods from a burning dwelling. The residence of a Mr. Snell had taken fire, and before it was discovered, it had gained such headway that the building could not be saved. The men succeeded in getting out nearly everything of any value. The family took refuge in a small office upon the grounds, that, fortunately, escaped the flames. The weather was cold, with several inches of snow on the ground, and the family has been put to a good deal of inconvenience. But for the presence of the men, they would have lost nearly everything.

Despite the desolating war, and the general stagnation of business, and neglect of improvements, our Capital is really, even yet, a queenly city. Especially is it beautiful when viewed under the moonlight. While on guard at the stilly hour of midnight, I often turn and look upon the town, as it lies in panoramic splendor before me, till I am lost in admiration, and almost forget that I am on post. Spread out over its numerous hills, it sits a very queen among cities. The dim outline of the taller buildings traced across the horizon, the numerous lights that glimmer in the distance, the dull noise of the water falling over the rocks in the James, the thud of arriving and departing trains, and the sound of the bells, as they tell the hours as they pass—all these combine to fill my mind with admiration for the Capital of the Confederacy.

> "As yet, 'tis midnight deep. The weary clouds,
> Slow meeting, mingle into solid gloom"—

and, as now and anon, they cast their shadows over the town and hide it from view, I think of the changing fortunes, the successes and reverses of our arms, and of the tide of war that has ebbed and flowed, and beat its angry waters at the granite feet of our Metropolis.

For well-nigh three years, the swash of this surging tide has echoed at the gates of this devoted town, but it stands yet, a gibraltar in a surging sea. Its dangers and its sacrifices have endeared it to the heart of every Virginian. When this war ends, it will be, I doubt

not, the Mecca of the Confederacy. Here around, in Hollywood, in Oakwood, and elsewhere, sleep thousands of the bravest heroes of the South, who have fallen in its defense. Here tens of thousands more have bravely fought, bled and suffered. These things give an air of mournful interest, and of tender sacredness, to the city, that time can never obliterate. To this spot, the heart of the Veteran, like the pilgrim of Islam to the shrine of the Prophet, in future years, will turn to admire and worship.

The Congress of the Confederacy is now in session at the Capitol in the city, called together to consider and deliberate on the exigencies of war, and the pressing need of devising ways and means of repleting the armies, and providing food and clothing for the men. They have a grave duty, a great and imperative task before them. May they be found equal to it. The army is looking to them for help. May they not have to look in vain.

Read Numbers vi: 24-26, and pray for the final glorious success of our cause.

Your friend, B.

[The countless Confederate dead that repose in the cemeteries, and in numerous unknown graves, about the city of Richmond, though unmarked and neglected many of their graves may be, can never be forgotten. The historian, the bard, the painter, the sculptor, will

embalm their deeds, and the willow and ivy that bend over them, will keep green their memories to the latest ages. It fell to the lot of but a few of the S. L. A. to fill honored graves in the sacred soil that environs the once beleagured city. J. Thomas Brown, Josiah Gwaltney, Zacheriah Holland, James Pond, and Edward W. Wright, are all that I can now recall to mind. Somewhere there, it is supposed in Oakwood, these, our former comrades, sleep their last sleep. But the survivors who yet remain will not forget them. And it is the purpose of this humble narrative, to tell, in the course of it, as each one fell, the part he bore in the contest for home, and honor, and State.

The winter of 1863-'64 passed quietly by for the army around Richmond. No military operations were undertaken until near the close of the winter, and no public event of any importance that ought to be mentioned in these pages. There was an affair of some significance that was threatened, and the S. L. A. was called out, and held in readiness, to aid in suppressing the apprehended movement. But, fortunately, their services were not required; and it is deemed best that the particulars be not given—that the secret should perish with the survivors of the S. L. A.]

LETTER TWENTY-NINTH.

Forage details—Condition of the country visited—"Greens" and pot-liquor—Why soldiers are given to "raiding"—A lecture on Palestine—Pay-day in camp—Note.

CAMP SCHERMERHORN, VA.,
Feby. 4, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—The forage wagons of the Battalion have been out a good deal this winter, making long trips after feed for the horses. Sometimes they are gone several days. The section visited mostly lies northeast of Richmond, in Hanover and King William counties. I have been out with the wagons on several of these expeditions, and I like it much better than laying idle in camp. When we go into King William, we cross the Pamunkey at the Piping-Tree ferry—for there are no bridges—or at Chester.

Taxes are being paid in kind now, that is, in corn, forage, cotton, wool, etc., and our wagons are sent out to receive these things and convey them to camp. And, though there are frequently some discomforts to be endured on these trips at this season, yet a tour over a section of country that is new to one, has its interesting and relieving features, and I get on the detail as often as I can. One meets with new scenery at every turn, learns something of the topography and general condition of the country; and sometimes a kind farmer

treats one to fruit or something nice to eat. We make journeys of thirty or forty miles, stay out four or five days, and almost always contrive to bring back with us into camp something to help out the miserably short rations that "Cousin Sally Ann"—C. S. A.—is giving us now.

The section that we have been visiting, however, has been overrun and pillaged by the armies, and the people really have very little of anything to spare. The slaves have mostly gone off to the Blue Coats, and the few white men that remain—old men and boys—are not capable of producing much surplus. The farms are mostly in a sad state of neglect, and broom-straw and pine bushes are fast invading the once productive acres.

King William, however, is a fine county, even now, with a good soil and fine climate, and there are many good farms. At present, large areas are idle. No wheat or grass crops are growing, and the live-stock has been greatly depleted.

But most of the men contrive, on their return from these details, to bring with them a sack or two of collards, or turnip salad, or kale, or something green, to boil with the modicum of meat, and thus have a big kettleful of pot-liquor to drink. I tell you, my friend, there is nothing in the world, that I know of, equal to plenty of good, hot pot-liquor, for restoring life and vivacity to a lean and lank Confederate soldier. Do

not smile or look incredulous. The average soldier can smell pot-liquor a mile off, and he will go for it every time, unless he is tied.

And "greens!" Did you ever see the negroes eat greens, at an old-time corn-shucking? It was nothing to the way the soldiers devour them. To the hungry soldier—and all of them are hungry now—to the half-famished soldier it is equal to a wedding feast. There is not a man of the S. L. A. who cannot tell, by a sort of prescience or instinct, when a pot-boiling is going on in camp. And as soon as they can locate "the game," it is amusing to see them coming round, cup in hand, begging for "just a little bit of that liquor!"

A cup of hot pot-liquor is a boon to the soldier. It has a wonderfully invigorating and reviving effect. It warms, exhilarates, cheers. It thaws the frozen heart, moves the silent tongue, sends a prayer to the lip of the recipient, and starts a tear of happiness in the eye of the giver. I will never cease to sing the praises of pot-liquor as long as I live.

Do you wonder how some soldier boys that you know ever could "fall from grace" so far as to forget their early training, and be given to "raiding?" I tell you it is nature calling for what the system really needs. And when "the springtime has come, gentle Annie," and a soldier can secure a little piece of bacon, a hock joint, or a bone, forthwith he is off to hunt for something to boil with it. And if a turnip patch, or a garden

of collards, lies in his way, and the stingy owner will not sell or give him "a little mess," is it a great mystery that some of those "greens" should disappear, when once the evening shadows fall? The boy has "located" the game, and he would have it, though a Federal gunboat were guarding the ground. There may be, there are conditions, where the eighth commandment does not apply. See, for instance, Prov. vi: 30. Do not fear, on this account, that the soldier boy will become a reprobate. He will not. He cannot.

I have lately been to hear a great lecturer tell about the land of Palestine. As the subject was one that is always and profoundly interesting to me, I managed to buy a ticket, and attended the lecture. It was given at the Second Baptist church, by the Rev. John Leyburn, who has visited the Orient, and describes scenes and events from personal observation and knowledge. I cannot give you even the briefest synoposis of the address, but it was both very interesting and instructive to me. I was amply repaid for the Confederate dollar that it had cost me. There is no place in the wide world that I would more love to visit that the Holy Land—the "Lord's land."

At last, after four months' waiting, pay-day has come around again, our command has been paid off, and the boys are happy—as happy as Confederate scrip can make them. But what will a month's pay—$12—buy

now, when everything has advanced to fabulous prices? The whole four months' pay would not buy a barrel of flour or a suit of clothes. But the Government owes each one of us a $100 bounty, for re-enlisting. When we get that, we will be quite flush.

May peace and health be with you all.

Your friend, B.

[My comrades, I am sure, will be able to appreciate fully, and enjoy, the allusion to "spring greens" and pot-liquor. They will bear testimony to its truthfulness, for were they not among those same boys who presided at many a pot-boiling of "ye olden time?" And some of them, I fear, not all, but some of them, will have to plead guilty to the charge of "raiding" a little, on certain hard and trying occasions. When all other resources failed them, there was one resort that generally won the prize, and the boys knew how to use it.

The paragraph in reference to the lecture on Palestine is admitted here to illustrate the fact, that, although the thunders of war were loudly reverberating from every nook and corner of the Confederacy, yet there were life and ambition enough remaining in the land for the people to turn aside awhile to intellectual things. The spirit for advancement and improvement was not dead. In the midst of their heroic struggle for personal liberty and State independence, they still found time to listen to the educator and the literatus.

In the campaign of 1863 as a whole, the advantage was decidedly on the side of the Federal arms. With the defeat of Hooker and the fall of Jackson, victory seemed to have forsaken our banners. The severe reverse at Gettysburg, and the fall of Vicksburg, were disasters from which the South never recovered. It is useless to speculate on what might have been, but, if the expedition into Pennsylvania had never been undertaken—and if a corps of General Lee's army had been sent in time to the aid of the garrison at Vicksburg—perhaps—perhaps the march of Sherman through Georgia, and of Grant from the Wilderness to Appomattox, would never have been; and the Confederacy would have gained the prize for which it contended. Fighting to resist invasion, from the moment the South itself became an invader, its fortunes began to wane, and success was impossible.]

LETTER THIRTIETH.

Campaign of 1864 begun—Confederate victories—Dahlgren-Kilpatrick cavalry dash—Its nefarious purpose—And farcical failure—Stirring events expected—Note.

CAMP SCHERMERHORN, VA.,
March 6, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—The military drama of 1864 has already begun, and battles have been fought in Florida, in Mississippi, and in Texas. And I am glad to say the result has been Confederate victories in each case. On February 20th, our General Finegan gained a great victory at Olustee, Fla., capturing prisoners, cannon, and arms. On the 22d, General Forest achieved a victory at Okolona, Miss. And the Federals are reported to be badly beaten, in their attempted advance into Texas from Louisiana. These successes have greatly revived the drooping spirits of our people and armies, and are, I sincerely trust, a happy omen of greater victories everywhere.

And the ball has opened here in Virginia, also. Already we have been called out to meet a proud and boastful foe. Bands of Federal cavalry, under Dahlgren and Kilpatrick, have just made a sudden dash to capture Richmond, and, on March 1st, our Company was hastily sent to the outworks west of the city, where Kilpatrick was said to be advancing. At the same time

(Kilpatrick and Dahlgren having divided their forces), Captain Thornton's Battery was moved to a point north of the city, and Captain Rives's Company to a position on the east. Thus it was the design of the enemy to attack the city at two or more points at the same time.

The plan was well conceived, and it showed great audacity and daring on the part of the foe. But they failed to press their advantage with vigor, after they had gained sight of the prize, and so they missed it and accomplished nothing.

The enemy's forces, under Kilpatrick, appeared near the outer works, on the western side of the city, on the afternoon of the 1st, and were met by infantry, aided by our Battery. After a short engagement, they were easily repulsed, and, without renewing the attack, the enemy drew off, going in a northerly direction. His design, evidently, was to unite with Dahlgren, who was coming up on the north of the city.

But Dahlgren did not arrive till late at night on the 1st, and in the darkness, having crossed beyond his intended point of attack, he became entangled with our forces, and his troops became confused. In his attempt to get out of the trap, Dahlgren himself was killed, and his body left in our lines. As soon as daylight occurred on the 2d, a feeble engagement took place. But having lost their leader, and also a number of prisoners, these forces also retired, going in the direction of the Peninsula.

Despite his daring attempt, the enemy showed very little vim in the execution of his plans. His effort was too feeble to alarm even a force of conscripts that were posted at the point where Dahlgren came up.

The night of March 1st was rainy and dark, and having met with no picket, Dahlgren's troops rode into our lines without knowing it. In the slight skirmish that ensued, their General was killed, and some prisoners were taken on both sides.

Dahlgren's body was taken into Richmond, and papers were found upon it that revealed a most diabolical and dastardly plot. The design of the sudden dash was shown to be, the capture of Richmond, with as many of the higher officials as possible, all of whom were to be executed, and then the Federal prisoners in the Libby, and on Belle Isle were to be released, to sack and burn the city, and overawe, maltreat, and murder the citizens!

But a gracious Providence ordered it otherwise. Such a fiendish outrage was not to be. The skillful disposition of the Confederate forces about the city caused the enemy to conclude that *they* stood a better chance of being slain, than did our beloved President and Cabinet.

It is hard to believe that military men of respectable training, like Kilpatrick and Dahlgren, would stoop to a plot so low and wicked as this attempt seems to have been. There is reason to believe that the plan originated elsewhere, and that these officers were mis-

led. In view of recent events in which our Company has already figured to some extent, there, doubtless, were spies concealed in Richmond, who were keeping the foe informed of the condition of affairs among our people, and of what our Government was doing—and these leaders had looked for some material aid *from within the city,* to enable them to carry out their nefarious purpose! Did they suppose that there were no forces at all to defend the city, and that they could ride into the very heart of it without interruption, with a troop so small as was the one led by them? The feeble effort that they made to carry out their plans shows clearly enough that, either they were incompetents, wanting in skill and judgment to command an army, or that *they were looking to other hands* to do the hellish work of slaughter, rapine, and violence among the helpless people of a great city.

This sudden dash of a comparatively small body of Federal cavalry, at this time, and under the circumstances that surrounded it, and preceded it, is invested with more than usual significance, although our papers have little to say about it. What if the enemy had succeeded in breaking into the city and carrying out their designs, by liberating the large number of Federal prisoners in the Libby and on Belle Isle? What a pandemonium of misrule, lawlessness, confusion, pillage, robbing, personal violence and murder would have quickly resulted! The picture is too horrible to contemplate! The plot, wherever or by whom conceived,

will doubtless be noted by the future fair and impartial historian, as *one of the foulest blots* on the character and spirit of the foe in this war. What Southern boy, with a heart even as big as a mustard seed, could refuse to fight, to aid in repelling such vandals from our soil? It gives me pleasure to know that the Surry Artillery held a hand, and aided in driving off these would-be assassins and fiends.

The summer's campaign is starting early this year, and, doubtless we will have plenty of work to do before its close. We do not expect to remain in our present quarters much longer. The Company, and, in fact, the whole Command, is in good trim, the men ready and resolute, and the horses in fair condition. We all feel, too, that we are engaged in a righteous cause, and when the opportunity comes, we intend to strike hard "for home and native land."

Continue to pray for us, and for the success of the Southern armies everywhere.

Your friend, B.

[The Federal authorities, it is said, denied the fact that the Kilpatrick-Dahlgren expedition was set on foot for any such purpose, or clothed with any such authority, as that claimed for it by our people. They disputed the existence of any such papers as those purporting to have been found on the body of General Dahlgren.

How, then, did the charge originate? Surely it was not manufactured from the whole cloth by our officials.

The writer was a private in the ranks when the events here recorded were transpiring, and, of course, knew nothing of what was doing in official circles. But he did have eyes and a mind to see and contemplate. And sharing, as he did, in the affair of the 1st and 2d of March, 1864, in which the Federal cavalry was so easily turned aside from Richmond, without making so much as a schoolboy show of pluck—and joining this event with other matters, with which he was, at the time, cognizant, he believes now, and has always believed, that it was the purpose of this expedition, *by the aid of a hand within the city,* to unfasten the doors and turn the lion out of the cage, to sate itself on blood and plunder! By drawing off their forces, and leaving the city to be sacked and burned by a wild and lawless horde, they would thus escape, so they thought, any responsibility for the act, and prevent foreign nations from expressing disapprobation thereof. It proved at the time a farcical failure. But, in view of what might have been, it ceased to be a farce, and revealed the possibility of the existence of a terrible volcano beneath our feet. It was a narrow escape from what might have proved a most serious disaster to the Southern cause. It was also a signal light in the social system that should have been more carefully heeded. I feel that the survivors of the S. L. A. will understand these things. They shared in the events, and were cognizant of the undertow that was moving along beneath the tide. I am writing for them, not for the public eye, and need not express myself more clearly here.]

LETTER THIRTY-FIRST.

The "Soldiers' Home"—Oakwood Cemetery—A chicken "raid"—Double duty—Songs—Note.

CAMP SCHERMERHORN, VA.,
April 10, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—I had heard frequent mention of the famous Soldiers' Home in Richmond, but have had no opportunity of testing the hospitalities thereof, until one day recently. Being in the city without a written "permit," I was halted by a guard, and taken to the aforesaid "hotel," to give cause and reason why a "high private" should be prowling about the town without the necessary papers. As my excuse did not quite satisfy the gentleman in command, I was told to remain over until the next morning.

As it was near the dinner hour, and being curious to test the capacity of their "bill of fare," I kept quiet till the drum sounded, and the meal was served. The guests, of whom there were some twenty or thirty, were arranged all in line, but without being seated, the roll of names was called, and then a tray of light bread, cut into half-loaves, each loaf already small enough, was passed down the line. Each man took a piece, and each man proceeded to put it away where it would do him the most good.

This was the only course that was served, which, I think, you will grant was a very light dinner, even for these times. But I have long been used to this sort of board, and so I ate my half-loaf in silent thankfulness, and then went up to the top of the "Home" to take a survey of the surroundings, and select a good point of exit. There were a few guards stationed around, and a high wall enclosed the little yard. But the guards were tired and listless, and a low shed in the rear presented an available "weak point" in their line of environment. Awaiting a favorable chance, I easily scaled the wall and was down on the outside without any one knowing about it.

Being pretty well acquainted with the streets and alleys of the town, I managed to evade the guards, and soon made my way back to Camp, fully satisfied with my experience in the "Soldiers' Home," and just in time to fall in line and answer at roll call. When the list of boarders at the "Home" was called for supper that night, the official in charge expressed some surprise at the absence of "that tall fellow with the artillery cap on."

The "Home" serves as a sort of temporary prison for men who are found in the city without "permits," where they are held until they can be returned to their commands. It also supplies a stopping-place at night for a soldier on furlough, who is passing through the city to or from camp. In the latter respect, it fills an important end, providing gratis a shelter for the night

and something at least to eat, for one who has no money to pay for more expensive lodgings. It was a wise and charitable conception, in fact, a necessary provision for the scores of Confederate soldiers who are constantly passing to and from the armies, or stopping here at night.

You have heard of Oakwood Cemetery, the soldiers' burying-ground? It lies on the eastern, or rather, the northeastern, side of the city. It covers several acres of level ground, and is reserved for the burial of Confederate soldiers who die in the hospitals here, or are killed in battle near the city. The native trees on the ground are mostly of some species of the oak genus, and the ground, properly cleared of debris and fenced, would be a beautiful last resting-place for a soldier. Already there are many hundred graves, and it is by no means the only place within sight of the city where the fallen patriots of our Southland sleep.

I have been over the grounds on more than one occasion, searching for the grave of some lost acquaintance, (for soldiers sometimes get lost from their companions in a strange sort of way), and as I noted the evidences of regard for some of the sleepers that marked the little wooden head-boards, I could not help but pause to think and moralize, how some one's friend and dear one rested there. The little rosebuds and other floral offerings planted there, indicated, despite all the wickedness and sin that is in the world, how Love and

Friendship never die. Occasionally, a small marble shaft or slab, indicated more of opulence. But the graves are all well and neatly kept by some careful or pious hand, even those marked by the word "unknown" being as tenderly cared for as the rest. This feature, the "unknown" ones, is, perhaps, the saddest circumstance connected with the burial of our dead. It is lamentable. But though unknown they rest on earth, their deeds and noble sacrifices will never be forgotten. A nation's heart will enshrine their dust,

> "Till morning's latest sunlight fades
> On the blue tablet of the deep."
>
> And armed ghosts shall rise to tell,
> They fought for home and freedom well.

Unknown they lie on earth, but they are not, and can never be, forgotten. Their deeds and self-devotion to the cause they loved, will endear them to the hearts of their countrymen, and of posterity, so long as men love liberty, or have manhood enough to honor the brave.

Will you chide me very much, my friend, if I tell you what a wicked thing some of us did a few nights since? You know that rations have got to be outrageously light this winter. We have been fourteen days at a time with nothing at all but corn meal furnished us, and of that but one light pound per day to the man. And some of the boys declared they could

stand it no longer. One of them had found out where a fine lot of chickens roosted at night, and as the owner would not sell a single one, the party was made up.

After roll call at night, six of us set forward, with a bag or two to hold the game, and one or two rusty firearms for defence. We soon found the place, and while two stood guard for the rest, we forced the door, and while one held the bag, a tall fellow among them gathered down the birds, and deposited them safely in the aforesaid bag. As the family nearby remained quiet, we did not stop until we had "stripped the roost," and secured all there were of them, eighteen, including the rooster. But we afterwards turned him loose, to crow for them in the morning.

We got back to camp without mishap, and proceeded to dress the fowls, and fit them for an early boil the next day. But during our absence roll call had been ordered and the whole party was caught and booked for double duty. But the officers—good, easy men they are—"scented game," and did not even have the barracks searched.

Suffice it to say, we enjoyed our chicken hugely, and before the next night there was not a bone of it left. Even the captain got a nice piece for letting us off so easily. And we spoke of sending the Colonel a wing, but did not. Was it all wrong? We own it; we deprecate it, and hate to have to resort to it at times. But when hunger gnaws so fiercely, who can resist the temptation to appease it when he can? Our double

duty, we thought, was light enough for the good times we had, and one comrade declared he wished that we had taken the rooster, too, since we got along so well. This incident will show you how pinched we are, quite often, for something to eat.

But camp life has its pleasant, as well as its repellent features, and, though the soldier, many a time, is both hungry and sorrily clad, he is ever ready for a song, and many a lively air, or national ode, is heard in or about our Camp at the "stilly hour of even," before the final roll call and tattoo. Several of the boys sing well. All of them try to sing at times. But I think Lieutenant Foreman is listened to more than the rest. Did you ever hear Wallace Foreman sing? When he strikes in on sweet "Annie Laurie" or the "Bonnie Blue Flag," all the rest stop to listen. But it is when he is threading his way with a loving heart through his own "My Maryland," that his soul seems to melt in tenderness, till his song vibrates and recedes, almost like harp notes borne away by the evening breeze. He is tenderest then, for his heart is touched. And then there are "Dixie," and "Sweet Evelena," and "Stonewall Jackson's Way," and half a score more songs that are favorites with our boys.

But better and sweeter far than these, are the songs of praise that we often hear from some tent at night, where the professed followers of Christ have assembled

for a little time of prayer and thanksgiving, ere they retire to their humble beds. Then it is that the low and measured cadence of "Nearer, my God, to thee," or "How firm a foundation," or "There is a fountain filled with blood," falls on the ear of the listener with soothing and hallowing effect. Or else the stirring notes of "All hail the power of Jesus' name" rings out through the Camp like a bugle call to battle. And while the singing goes on, the heart of the lonely sentinel on his post is moved, or the soldier reposing quietly in his tent nearby, sends up a prayer to heaven in consonance with the song.

And then, when the last hymn has been sung, and the men all lie down to rest, some one somewhere in Camp, who has been listening to the songs of praise, and whose heart feels the holy inspiration of the hour, strikes up with "Home, sweet home," and as the tenderly sweet and heart-stirring solo floats softly out over the Camp, many a rough soldier, who weeps not for wounds or blood, dashes a tear from the eye, while his bosom yearns for one sight more of the dear old home, so far away, and of the loved ones he has not seen in so many long months, and, perchance, may never see again.

I wonder do our friends at home sing any now? Are the songs of Zion ever heard floating out on the matin or vesper breeze, down in old Tidewater land? It is an ill day for any people, where the songs of praise and gladness are stilled—when men go about in silent and

melancholy mood, as if they were afraid some foe would spring upon them from ambush, and maltreat them because of their joy?

It is not often that sorrow finds expression in song, but when it does, the heart-chords vibrate to the sweetest and tenderest tones. And this is why the songs that are sung in times of war, are invariably those that most stir the heart, and awaken the emotions of thanksgiving and of patriotism—gratitude to heaven for mercies bestowed, or love of country, home and family.

Did you ever think of this? Is it not true? For answer, note the character of the songs you hear the next month or two.

Your friend, B.

[It has been one purpose of this record to present a good deal of the life of the soldier in camp, to show how the men lived and acted when off duty. Another object has been to give a passing picture of the times, and tell of things that the younger generations would never hear about elsewhere. This letter covers a little space in both of these. No one would ever hear of a chicken raid or double duty, or scarcely of the songs in camp, save in a work like this. Nor would the "Soldiers' Home" or the Confederate Cemetery be so fully described on the staid and stilted page of history as it is here.

But, above all else, I have tried to give my comrades a truthful, and, as far as I can, an accurrate account

of events and scenes, and persons and things, that fell along our pathway during those four eternal years. Everything in this letter, therefore, even the chicken-pulling, is a true picture of things that were, or of scenes and places.

As to the "songs in camp," they were an ever-recurring attendant of the daily life of the men. There was no day so dark and gloomy as to silence all attempt at song on the part of some one; and the voice of melody in some form, comic or light, sentimental or merry, grave or gay, serious or pious, was almost constantly heard in some part of our Camp, through the day, and often in the "sma' wee hours" of early morn. There were a few men whose tongues seemed never still. Surely my comrades will recall to mind that chattering magpie of song, that incorrigible jay bird of jest and banter, that versatile clown of comic verse, Joseph Kea—will remember how his tongue was always running through some merry or jesting stanza, or half stanza, or song, to the amusement of some and the disgust of others. Joe was the magpie of the Camp, the general tease of the touchy and the irritable, the universal clown of the Company. He was, withal, a good soldier, too, and did his duty, rain or shine. Alas, that his own life should have passed under such a cloud during his last few years subsequent to the war! His light went out in gloom, with no comrade near to sing for him the songs of hope or trust.

But as to those better songs, the songs of Zion, that several of the comrades used to sing so well—who can

estimate the good they did, in a silent way, as they fell, almost nightly, upon the ears, and into the hearts, too, of the other men? There is power, oftentimes, in the words and melody of a song to seize upon the heart-chords, and cause them to vibrate as nothing else can, to a feeling of sorrow or of hope—sorrow for sin committed, hope in the pardoning love and mercy of Christ. And I am personally conscious that the religious songs in our Camp had an influence for good in the lives of some of the men, and, I believe, of many. I wished to say this much for the encouragement of the few survivors of that singing band. Alas! how few there are of them now on this side of the mystic stream that divides from the upper Camp.]

LETTER THIRTY-SECOND.

The Butler campaign begun—Battle of Port Walthall—A Confederate victory—Losses—Note.

SWIFT CREEK, VA.,
May 10, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—The operations for the summer have been started up for us about Richmond by General Butler—Benjamin Franklin Butler, of New Orleans fame—who has but recently steamed up the James river with a strong fleet of gunboats and transports, the latter carrying a land force of 30,000 or 40,000 men, it is said, all equipped and panoplied for war galore. His object being the capture of Petersburg, and of the railroad connecting it with Richmond, and also to threaten the latter city, he has established his headquarters at, or near, Bermuda Hundred, and has already made two attempts to seize and destroy the railroad.

In consequence of this movement, the S. L. A. received orders, on the 6th inst., to proceed rapidly to the vicinity of Port Walthall. The other Batteries of the Battalion were held in reserve to meet a threatened advance in another direction, and did not accompany us.

We did not arrive at the designated point on the 6th in time to take part in the initial engagement at Dunn's farm, on the afternoon of that day—an affair in which a few hundred South Carolinians of General

Hagood's Brigade, under the command of Colonel Graham, met and checked Butler's advance to destroy the railroad.

On the 7th inst., Butler moved up a much larger force—five brigades—under General Brooks, and early in the afternoon the important battle of Port Walthall was opened by one of our guns that had been sent forward, and which engaged the enemy near the ground where the fight of the preceding evening occurred. This gun, however, was soon forced to retire, the ammunition chest having been stuck by a shell that exploded among the cartridges of powder, doing, however, but little material harm.

Hereupon, Generals Hagood and Bushrod Johnson formed their infantry lines along the railroad cut, from near Craig's house to a point half a mile toward Chester, the left resting upon a small brook that crosses the railroad at nearly a right angle. The line was thus protected by the cut-outs along the road, and held a comparatively strong position. Our four guns were stationed at intervals on rising ground some fifty or more yards to the rear of the infantry line, where we had an open field and a clear view of the advancing foe. Altogether, the arangement of our forces, both the infantry and artillery, was skilfully made, and our guns had the advantage of elevated ground.

As soon as the enemy's forces emerged from the wood into the open field on the east of the railroad, our infantry opened upon them, and our guns began to shell

them vigorously. They advanced in three columns, extending across the open field, and into the wood on the north. The first line approached more than half way across the field, and when it halted was barely three hundred yards from our line of infantry, posted along and in the railroad cut.

For two mortal hours, and more, the battle raged without interval or cessation. Our guns continued to ply their lines liberally with shot and shell. Still the enemy held his ground, and seemed determined to force his way across the road, over our thin line of infantry. Finding that we held tenaciously to the ground in his front—for it was, in fact, the key of the situation—the Federals, without lessening their forces before us, brought up more troops, and essayed a flank movement on our extreme left. Hastily adjusting his lines to receive it, General Johnson met the blow with great vigor, when it recoiled, and the enemy retired before our shells that were ploughing their way through his ranks with stunning effect. During this part of the engagement, the forest through which the Federals had charged was set on fire by our shells, and the foe, after caring for their wounded, retired further off, and did not renew the attack. Some of their killed, however, having been left in the wood, were burned in a shocking manner.

Upon the failure of their flank movement, and observing that we still fought them stubbornly in their front—and partly, no doubt, on account of the fire that

was raging on their right, the enemy, completely foiled by a force much inferior to their own, drew off out of range of our guns.

Thus a force of some 1,500 infantry and a Battery of four guns only, had succeeded in repulsing an army of five or six brigades, numbering as many thousand men, and had held their ground without yielding an inch. They had saved the railroad from being cut in two, and had taught the foe the futility of any attempt to capture Petersburg along this line. The battle, therefore, was a decided Confederate victory.

In this engagement, our Company had three men severely wounded, and one or two slightly. Malory Shields, of Hampton, was shot through the body, but walked half a mile to the doctor's tent. And Edward Wright and Zacheriah Holland, both of Surry, were dangerously wounded and have been sent to the city hospital. One gun had its ammunition chest exploded, but was uninjured otherwise, and the chest was soon replaced. Colonel Lightfoot, who was with us, and directed our movements, expresses himself as highly pleased with the manner in which our men handled their guns and stood up to their posts throughout the engagement.

The loss of our infantry, in killed and wounded, was considerable, but not heavy, being greatest on the extreme left of the line, where the most determined effort to dislodge them was made. Bushrod Johnson's Tennesseeans fought splendidly, as did also Hagood's

Carolinians and Wise's Virginians. The enemy's loss was great, both in the open field, in front of the centre of our lines, and where the attempt was made to seize the railroad.

The stubborn resistance that our 1,500 men had made against a force of from 5,000 to 6,000, with plenty of reserves in the rear, served to check the enemy's advance and delay his movement for that day. In the meantime re-enforcements were hastening to the scene. While the battle was going on, a section of the Washington Artillery was being rushed to our aid, but did not arrive until late at night. In the meantime, though our forces had not yielded an inch of ground, had repulsed the enemy in his most persistent effort, and the entire field of battle had been left in our possession, yet it was deemed proper, after nightfall and darkness intervened, to cover the movement, to retire from the railroad to the vicinity of Swift Creek Mills, one and a half or two miles distant. Accordingly, our Battery was drawn off. The infantry line was readjusted to a position nearer the Creek, and details were made to care for the wounded and bury the dead.

I must not forget to tell you of one rather amusing incident that occurred during the hottest of the fight on the 7th. The flagman at the railroad station is a colored man. The station house was within the line of battle. But the old darkey, true to the South, had retired to his cabin, and, it is said, was engaged earn-

estly in prayer for the success of our army. But presently the wicked Federals sent a shell crashing through his humble domicile, which thoroughly aroused him from his wrestlings, and he made a precipitate retreat to the rear, muttering imprecations on the head of the enemy for treating his house so rudely.

I will tell you of the events of the 8th and 9th in another letter. Peace and safety be yours.

Your friend, B.

[The battle of Walthall Junction, on the 7th of May, 1864, when we consider the issues involved, was one of great importance. Had General Butler pushed forward with energy and celerity, as soon as he had landed at Bermuda Hundred, there can be no doubt about it but that he might have taken Petersburg almost without opposition. On the 6th of May, the day that he made the first advance, the only Confederate force between his army and Petersburg was the small one of 500 or 600 men of General Hagood's command that he encountered in Dunn's field, less than a mile from the P. & R. rail, and only five or six miles from the city. A determined dash of one or two hours, following the turnpike and the railroad bridges, all of which he would have had at his command, would have put the head of his army into the heart of the city.

Or, if General Butler could have known how near the goddess of fame stood by him that day, ready to crown him with the laurel wreath of immortality—and if he

could have turned his eye northward toward Richmond, and beheld how utterly defenceless the city stood—not 1,000 muskets between his army and Mayo's bridge, and the distance but twenty miles; yea, with his fleet of gunboats to aid him, and with Drewry's Bluff eliminated, which his army might have taken from the rear on the 7th, Richmond might have yielded to him almost without opposition. He lost time feeling his way, and by the time he had decided to fight, he found some one ready to oppose him. While Butler was delaying, the Confederates were concentrating. And when our Beauregard arrived on the field, there was no hope for Butler.]

LETTER THIRTY-THIRD.

The enemy advancing—Railroad torn up—Fight at Swift Creek—Trying to turn the flank—Advancing toward Richmond—Note.

SWIFT CREEK, VA.,
May 12, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—On the night of the 7th, our troops withdrew from Walthall Junction, retiring toward Swift Creek, and forming a new line across the turnpike, the centre resting near Squirrel Level church. Our Battery crossed over the Creek at the turnpike bridge, and the guns were posted in the works about two hundred yards beyond the Creek. Here we found the Washington Artillery, which had just arrived, occupying that part of the line extending from the turnpike to the railroad bridge at Dunlop's house.

On the 8th the enemy advanced again, seized the railroad, and tore up about one mile of the track, extending from near Craig's house toward Chester. In the afternoon the Federals advanced and attacked our infantry with vigor, and succeeded in forcing them back. The right of our line was driven back in some disorder, and these men forded the creek and formed on the side where the artillery was posted, and to the left of our Battery.

The foe, flushed with this small success, now brought up his artillery and posted it in and near the turnpike, on the northern side of the creek. They opened on us with shell, but the prompt answer and accurate aim of our guns soon knocked them out of the road, and they withdrew. Our Battery, aided by the Washington Artillery, continued to shell the woods in the direction of the Federals for some time, but as both their artillery and their army remained silent, we ceased firing and awaited further developments.

In the engagement of the 8th, a part of Hagood's and Wise's commands suffered considerably, sustaining some loss in killed and quite a number in wounded. The S. L. A. escaped without a casualty. We were not under the fire of the Federal infantry in this engagement.

Butler's forces employed the next few days in endeavoring to find a way around the Confederate left, and thus get into Petersburg by a more circuitous route than the one at first attempted. Failing in this, he began a movement toward Richmond, but was met on the turnpike a little beyond Chester by the men of the 10th Virginia Battalion and other forces, and driven back with loss. Butler now drew his forces off nearer to the James, evidently deeming it prudent to keep in proximity to his gunboats. He seemed now to abandon all further effort to advance upon Petersburg, and appears to have taken up the idea that the proper thing

for him to do was to capture Drewry's Bluff from the rear, and advance upon Richmond with both his fleet and army.

The turnpike being now open, and the enemy retiring, the Confederate forces, now considerably augmented by arrivals from the South and Tennessee, were thrown forward, advancing upon the turnpike as far as the Half Way Station.

While lying at Swift Creek our Company received an unusual treat one day in the way of rations. It came from the ladies—the noble women—of Petersburg—God bless them forever! Somehow they learned that our supplies had been very short for a long time. And so they got together and made up a big lot of nice bread, like that we used to have at home, and our wagons came in loaded with nice loaf bread, which was at once duly distributed to the hungry and thankful men. Many a soldier's heart sent up a prayer for blessings upon the patriotic women who had denied themselves to serve us.

We are anticipating some serious work in a day or two. Beauregard is here in command, and as soon as he takes a survey of the field, something will happen.

Your friend, B.

[The return of the S. L. A. on the 13th, over the same ground they had passed on the 6th and 7th, gave

us another opportunity of witnessing the vandalism that always and everywhere inspired the Federal heart from the very first of the struggle. The wanton destruction of private property was manifest on every hand. The tearing up of the railroad was, of course, to have been expected. About one mile of the track had either been overturned into the ditch or burned and the rails spoiled. If material, such as fencing, etc., was at hand, fires were built upon the track, and the rails, thus softened and bent out of shape, were rendered of no value. The Northern hordes appear to have been adepts in the art of destruction. Perhaps they found this the easiest way to conquer the South. General Butler himself, quite early in the course of the war, acquired a somewhat notable reputation, not only for permitting of vandalism, but for some things of sterner name.]

LETTER THIRTY-FOURTH.

A glance at operations elsewhere—Federal cavalry again—Butler's second advance—Note.

EN BIVOUAC,
May 13, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—We are now bivouacking in the woods, almost under the range of Butler's gunboats in the James. Occasionally the Federals send out a shell over this way, and the infantry, who are posted in front of us, welcome it with shouts and laughter. Sometimes they crash through the tree-tops under which the infantry are reposing, and the broken limbs fall down among the men. Butler's force seems to be threading its way up towards Drewry's Bluff.

Accounts have reached us that Lee is being hard pressed up at the Wilderness. The enemy is forcing his way slowly toward Richmond. But, of course, it is the old story repeated. The Federals number 150,000, all well equipped and fed; the Confederates 60,000—less than half.

And the other two Batteries of our Battalion—Thornton's and Rives's—have had work to do since we parted from them. It appears that the enemy planned a series of advances upon the Confederate Capital, and a force of cavalry under Sheridan have tried their hand on the defences of Richmond, on the northern side,

where Dahlgren made his ludicrous failure only two month ago. But Captain Thornton, with his six fine Napoleon guns, and the conscript fathers and others of the old guard, handled Sheridan's forces so roughly that he, too, drew off and retired from the scene without accomplishing anything. Thornton had one man killed and others wounded.

Butler appears to be about to try his hand once more in the "on to Richmond" game, and is manifesting restiveness under the close pressure of the Confederate lines. A new alignment of our forces is being quietly made to-day, and our Battery has orders to occupy Fort Stephens, a strong entrenchment near the turnpike, only a little beyond the Half Way Station.

Our Battery will not move, however, until darkness sets in, unless Butler forces a general engagement during the afternoon. There are entrenchments back of us, to which the infantry will move. We have about 6,000 or 7,000 men here now, and our lines extend from a point near the James at Drewry's Bluff, in a half moon, around to Proctor's Creek.

A "grape-vine" courier, just arrived, informs us that our Company Q—poor fellows—over at the old quarters—Camp Schermerhorn—are nearly starved. They have no rations and no one in command there to draw for them, our Milton Gray being with us here. More than all, some of Q got an awful scare on the morning

of the 8th, when Sheridan was trying to ride into Richmond, over Thornton's Battery and the rest of them. The fight took place but a mile or so away from our late winter quarters, and some of their shells fell out as far as our Camp. Of course, this did not please Q, and they became alarmed for their safety.

Nearly all the citizens here in Chesterfield, whose homes are within the enemy's lines, have been obliged to move away. They report that they cannot endure the robbery and abuse to which they are subject. Everything they have in the way of provisions, and most of their stock and poultry, has been taken from them, and, in some cases, their furniture and beds broken up and destroyed before their eyes. Scores of women and children are thus rendered homeless and foodless. Ah, War! how bitter art thou, in thy heartless, merciless dealings with the children of men! The young and the strong may defy thy cruel blows; but the weak and the helpless, who will relieve their distress? Well may you, my friend, be grateful indeed that your home has not fallen within the lines of the invading army.

But it is nearly time to cook our ash-pone, and then, when darkness falls, another position. May the guardian angels keep us all, and may to-morrow's battle go softly with the S. L. A.

Your friend, B.

[The change of lines was made by the Confederate forces in this part of the field, as forecasted in this

letter, not because of any felt weakness or apprehension of defeat, but to secure a better and stronger position for defence. On the new line there were earthworks for the infantry and redoubts for artillery, and better ground to fight upon. But the Federals seemed to interpret the change as an evidence of weakness, and they responded quickly to it, and followed with a stronger force. Before morning on the 14th, their lines were well up to our own, and as soon as daylight opened fairly, their skirmish force was making it warm for us all along the lines.

But our Battery already occupied the works at Fort Stephens, and our own skirmishers were in advance, face to face with the enemy. And both Thornton's and Rives's Batteries had rejoined us during the night, and they also held positions in the works. I think, when all of our 16 guns opened upon the enemy, they must have understood that our artillery had been re-enforced and that a charge upon the works, to carry them by storm, would result in fearful loss among their men. It may have been this circumstance, more than any other, that deterred Butler from risking a general engagement on the 14th.

But, to offset the 16 guns of Lightfoot's Battalion, none of them heavier than 14-pounders, Butler sent up a fine battery of 24-pound Parrott guns, which took a position in the turnpike, only 300 yards from our position in the Fort, and within easy range of the infantry on our right. This artillery, a Rhode Island

battery, did fine work on the 14th, the men standing to their posts and handling their pieces with celerity and accuracy. But it must have been at a fearful sacrifice of blood. They were posted too near to the Confederate infantry, whose sharp-shooters picked off the cannoneers at a rapid rate. This battery was abandoned that night and fell into our hands. The S. L. A. passed two days, the 14th and 15th, in Fort Stephens, and were under fire continually, as long as daylight held, on both days. The next letter will tell of the chief incidents.]

LETTER THIRTY-FIFTH.

Two days under fire—Conduct of the men—Casualties and incidents—Note.

EN BIVOUAC,
May 17, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—The morning of the 14th of May dawned clear and bright, and skirmishing began between the advanced lines ere it was fully light. As we occupied an angle or corner of the Fort, only one side of which fronted toward the enemy's line, two guns only could be used upon them. Soon, however, the Federals brought up a battery of four Parrott guns, which they stationed on the turnpike to our right, at a distance of some 300 yards from us, and this battery began to shell us rapidly. This gave the other guns something to do, and they at once engaged with the enemy's battery.

About the time this battery began to salute us so rapidly, the Federal infantry in our front began a vigorous assault, forced back our line of skirmishers, and appeared as if they were about to charge our works. But we played upon their lines persistently and with effect, with the two guns that could be brought to bear in that direction, our infantry at the same time redoubling their fire, and the enemy did not advance further.

More infantry coming up to our aid, and taking position along the line of works to our left, extending in the direction of Drewry's Bluff, toward which point the Federal right seemed to be working its way, the firing became general and rapid all along the lines, both left and right, and held steadily without intermission for more than two hours. In fact, a general engagement with both musketry and artillery had begun, which continued, with more or less vigor, through the remainder of the day.

Neither army, however, manifested any disposition either to advance or retire. It was a case of stand and fire, each endeavoring to cripple the other the most, and gain, if he could, some advantage here or there. The enemy's one battery was handled with rapidity and accuracy, and they sent us quite a number of dangerous missiles, that exploded very near to our guns and did considerable damage.

The limber-chest—ammunition box—of gun No. 4 was struck and exploded by one of their ugly shells, and Sergeant G. M. Hargrave and ten or twelve men were either wounded or badly stunned. The boys did not stop their work, however, but continued to hurl their 12-pound Napoleon shells at them as fast as they could. Another limber was brought up promptly with more ammunition, and No. 4 worked on as if nothing had happened to them.

Another of their Parrott shells exploded upon the muzzle of gun No. 3, scarring it considerably, but do-

ing nō further injury to the gun. A fragment, however, of the same shell struck the arm of the cannoneer standing by the gun—James Pond, a youth, of Southampton county—and nearly severed the limb from the body. With remarkable presence of mind and coolness for one so young, Pond grasped the broken stump above the wound, to check the bleeding, and walked a mile to receive surgical attention.

Lieutenant J. W. Whitley received a painful musket wound in the shoulder, and retired. Private Benton D. Thomas likewise received a painful, but not dangerous, wound from a minnie ball. Several other men, six or eight, were slightly hurt during the day, but all refused to withdraw. All the men acted well, and some of them distinguished themselves in one way or another for coolness or efficiency.

Sergeant B. T. Bell handled his gun—No. 1, Napoleon—so well, and his manner was so calm and self-poised, that he drew upon himself the notice of General Johnson Hagood, who came into the Fort while the hottest of the firing was going on. Altogether, the casualties of the first day were 21 or 22 wounded, most of them but slightly. Four, however, had received painful, not to say dangerous, wounds, and these were sent on to the hospital in Richmond.

At nightfall all hands were set to work filling bags with sand, to raise and strengthen the works, and prepare for the sterner fight that was expected on the morrow. This done, beside the shotted guns, that had

barely yet cooled to their normal temperature, the cannoneers, each wrapped in his well-worn blanket, laid them down to seek rest and sleep, for nature was well-nigh exhausted, and the men greatly needed repose and recuperation. The physical and mental strain had been great. Twelve hours under continued fire is enough to test the endurance of the strongest and hardiest of men.

During the night, however, the Federal commander made a new disposition of forces, drawing off some of his infantry from our immediate front, and concentrating it nearer to Drewry's Bluff, and the battery that had annoyed us so much during the day, as it could not be carried off, was abandoned and fell into our hands. On the 15th, contrary to what we had anticipated the enemy, on our part of the lines, made but a feeble fight. They kept us engaged, however, all day, but put forth their strongest effort on the extreme right of the Confederate line, some six or eight miles away, and where our lines were at first forced back, but subsequently recovered and held their ground.

The 15th passed without any casualties worthy of note. The guns were fired leisurely, and the men rested under cover of the works, and talked of their experiences of the previous day. General Beauregard came into the Fort during the day. We were all glad to see him here, for we have confidence in his ability to conduct the fighting successfully.

At night we were drawn out of Fort Stephens, greatly to the satisfaction of most of the men, no doubt, and

the entire Battalion was moved down the left of the lines, where Beauregard was massing his forces, preparatory to the intended attack of the next day. As the men had lost sleep the preceding three nights, they slept well on the 15th. It was not their habit to borrow trouble, by reflecting that it might be the last night on earth for some of them. We all knew of the intended work of the morrow, but we rested well, expecting to be called at an early hour.

Your friend, B.

[The first day's engagement at Fort Stephens, the 14th of May, was not as heavy a fight, altogether, as was the battle at Walthall Junction on the 7th. Yet, on account of its continuance through the day, almost without lull or intermission, it tested the endurance of the men even more severely than the fight of the 7th. That continued only about three hours; this of the 14th twelve hours. The losses were about the same on both occasions. On the 7th we had an ammunition box exploded by a shell, and on the 14th the same casualty occurred again. Of the three men severely wounded on the 7th, two of them, Zacheriah Holland and W. E. Wright, subsequently died in hospital. Of the three badly injured on the 14th, one, namely, James Pond, though he had recovered from his wound, and was expecting, in a short time, to receive an honorable discharge from service, contracted pneumonia and died in the hospital sometime in June, 1864. His body rests in Oakwood Cemetery.]

LETTER THIRTY-SIXTH.

The battle of Drewry's Bluff—Charge of Terry's and Gracie's men—Prisoners—Note.

EN BIVOUAC,
May 18, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—By early dawn, on Monday morning, May 16th, the Confederate army was in motion, prepared for the work of the day. The atmosphere was cool and bracing, but a dense fog prevailed, hiding everything from view fifty yards away. This circumstance greatly favored the advance, and enabled the Confederate infantry to approach very near the enemy's lines before they were observed. The charge was made on our extreme left, near the James river, and but a little way from Drewry's Bluff.

Our infantry struck the Federals just as they were preparing their morning meal, and so sudden and fierce was the onset, that they quickly gave way, and soon our men had them in full retreat. Just as the Federal line had been rolled back by the infantry, Colonel Lightfoot's Artillery Battalion of 16 guns was thrown in on the same ground over which the infantry had just charged, and the guns were speedily unlimbered and brought into action on the retreating Federals.

Very soon, however, on account of the doubling up of a part of the enemy's line by the charging column,

and partly because of the dense fog, and the rapid change in the position of our own forces, our guns had to cease firing and move forward to another position, where we could fire over the heads of the advancing infantry.

Here we were on the ground where General Heckman's brigade and other forces, numbering 800 or 900 men, had just yielded to the fiery onset of the Confederate infantry that was first thrown upon the Federal column. The ground, for some distance around, was literally piled with muskets.

This splendid charge on the extreme left of our line was made by Terry's Virginians and Gracie's Alabamians, and it won the day for the Confederate side. So fierce had been the onset here, and so severe was the fire of Lightfoot's artillery, that the Federal columns continued to fall back rapidly for miles, not pausing until they had placed themselves well under the protection of their gunboats in the James.

The result of the battle was a complete defeat for Butler's army. It retreated in disorder, not to say confusion; and I hear that, but for the failure of one of our generals to carry out the orders given him by General Beauregard, the larger part, at least, of the Federal army would have been captured. This is unfortunate, but such slips will take place.

At one time during the early morning, our Battery had advanced within one hundred yards of the Federal line, with no infantry support near us. It was a critical

place for artillery. But our liberal employment of shell and canister doubtless deterred them from doubling back upon us.

During the hour in which the battle lasted on our part of the line, we had several men wounded, most of them but slightly hurt, but one or two severely. John L. Seward, a driver, was slightly hurt in the leg, while limbering up to advance. Julian H. Judkins was shot in the body. And Julian Stewart, a cannoneer, was wounded in the foot, receiving a complicated and dangerous hurt that kept him in hospital a long time.

The loss in killed and severely wounded men, of both armies, was heavy for so short an engagement. Dead or disabled men lay on the field in every direction, a large portion of them being Confederates. Of course, most of the wounded Federals made their way back to their own hospitals. The ambulance corps was engaged several hours in removing the wounded men. The doctors were out upon the field, attending to the desperate cases first.

The battle of the 16th of May, both in the numbers engaged on both sides, in the casualties occurring, in the issues involved, and in the direct results, ranks as a very important affair. It was a decided Confederate victory, and it insures the safety of Richmond on this side, and also of Petersburg, for some time to come, at least. We congratulate ourselves that Lightfoot's Artillery contributed largely toward this splendid result. The men all stood up to their work bravely, in face of

the leaden hail that hurtled around them, working their guns with rapidity and good effect. It seems almost like a special providence that so few of us were struck by the enemy's bullets. Let us thank God and take courage.

Pray for our cause, and for us.

Your friend, B.

[The battle of May 16th, ended the so-called Butler campaign of 1864 in Virginia. The contest had been short and severe. It lasted but ten days—May 6th-16th—and during that time Butler had fought six engagements, three of them being pitched battles, in none of which was he successful, and two of which—Walthall Junction and Drewry's Bluff—were acknowledged defeats. After the battle of the 16th of May, Butler drew in his lines to a very small area of Chesterfield county, with his headquarters at Bermuda Hundred, his left resting on the Appomattox at Point of Rocks, his right on the James nearly opposite to Curle's Neck farm. The Confederate line confronting his forces was drawn closely up, and the men lost no time in digging entrenchments, so that when General Lee's army reached the vicinity two weeks later, the men found works already constructed, for them to occupy. Butler's golden opportunity for winning fame as one of the distinguished military chieftains of the age, had passed away forever, and the future historian will have to rank him as one of the incompetents.

Only one thing had Butler done that he was sent to do. He had indeed reached the P. & R. rail, and had torn up and destroyed about one mile of the track. But he had neither captured the city of Petersburg, which he might easily have done on the 6th or 7th inst., or imperiled the safety of Richmond, which lay in his power, if he had promptly assaulted the works at Drewry's Bluff, from both the land and river at the same time.

With 30,000 men—some say 40,000—with his base upon a river, and a fleet to aid him, he allowed a force of 6,000 or 7,000, hastily called together, to defeat him in every engagement, and force him back into a state of harmless inertia, a condition of innocuous desuetude. To this result, the men of the S. L. A. congratulate themselves that they rendered very important and material aid. To this end they contributed freely of their toil and blood.

In connection with the account of the battle of the 16th of May, 1864, I take pleasure in laying before my comrades a page from the, as yet, unpublished "Reminiscences" of a gentleman of Floyd county, an ex-Confederate, who was a member of Kemper's Brigade, and an eye-witness and participant in the fight. It is from the pen of Mr. W. H. Morgan, of Floyd. The 11th and 24th Virginia infantry, of Kemper's Brigade, took the place of two of Gracie's regiments that had fallen back in the charge upon Heckman's forces. These two regiments (the Virginians) suffered severely. It was, says Mr. Morgan, "a hot time." Here is the extract:

"On the right of Gracie's Brigade, Hankins' Battery of Surry county was taking position. No unnecessary noise was made, no one spoke unless giving orders, and then in low tones. The artillery moved into position slowly, and with as little noise as possible. I remember well the cluck of the iron axles as the guns moved slowly into position as quietly as a funeral procession. When all was ready, and while it was yet quite dark, the Alabamians moved forward up the hill, the artillery keeping pace with them, firing by sections, each section moving forward after firing.

"Pretty soon the Yankee pickets opened fire on the advancing column, which is returned, the column moving on the while, driving the pickets from their rifle pits near the top of the hill. The artillery halted on the top of the hill, still firing away in the darkness beyond, throwing shot and shell into the woods in front where the enemy is supposed to be. It was a grand spectacle that dark morning, the firing of the battery by sections as it advanced, the roar of the guns, the flames of fire bursting forth in the darkness, though rather awe-inspiring at the time, yet grand nevertheless. I shall never forget the scene."

It was about this time in the progress of the battle that Kemper's Brigade charged down the hill and assisted in doubling in upon the enemy, and capturing a large number of prisoners. The Federal breastworks were soon in possession of our infantry, and the retreat of the enemy so precipitate as speedily to put them out of the range of our guns.]

LETTER THIRTY-SEVENTH.

Our losses—Company Q ordered to report—Watching the enemy—Spring's lush sweetness—More vandalism—Verses—Note.

En Bivouac,
May 20, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—Our loss in wounded men since the 7th inst. counts up about 24, of whom one-third were severely hurt and sent to the hospital, the remainder too slightly injured to require surgical attention, and did not leave camp. We have several men on the sick list, however, and these, too, have been sent into town, so that our number of effective men is reduced to a low figure.

In consequence of this depletion of our ranks, orders have been sent up to the old camp—our winter quarters—for all of Company Q to report for duty at once. Poor fellows! they have missed all the fun we have had and now must come and take whatever honors they can get. But we will put them in the front rank in the next fight.

We are now in temporary bivouac, a mile from the James, watching the enemy and resting from the labors, fatigues and battles of the past two weeks. General Gracie's Alabamians are in line in front of us, with Butler penned up on a narrow margin of land along

the river, where he lies under the cover and security of his war-boats—and the Capital of the Confederacy is still safe.

The forests are fast putting on their lush, green garniture of leaves, and fragrant buds and lovely flowers are smiling all around us, in marked contrast to the scenes we have lately beheld. Thousands of little bluets (Houstonia) cover the ground here all around us, and the wild violets and yellow cinquefoil are here in abundance.

> "The vernal sunbeams pour around
> A fairy light, uncertain, pale;
> The wind blows cool; the scented ground
> Is yielding odors on the gale."

While we were pushing Butler's army back, on the 16th, to its present position, we had abundant opportunity again to witness more of that peculiar penchant for despoiling and wasting private property, that has characterized the Federal armies from the very outset of this war. Furniture broken up, feather beds carried out into the fields, the ticking ripped open and the feathers scattered abroad—books and pictures torn and thrown around the yards—the poultry and stock killed—vehicles broken and rendered worthless—doors and windows broken—fences burned—crops destroyed. In one case I saw a piano left out in the barn. In another a fine painting of Patrick Henry thrust through with a bayonet.

Such is the vandal spirit of our foe. It is barbarism, savage ferocity, brutal cruelty. If these hordes could fight as well as they destroy, they would soon conquer us. Butler's men are no worse than the rest. Sheridan has an inkling that way. They all try to subdue us by pauperizing our people.

Permit me to give you here a specimen of soldier-boy verse, inspired by the scenes and surroundings in our camp, on the night of the 16th of May—the night following the battle near Drewry's Bluff:

ALONG THE LINES BY OLD BERMUDA.

Night, May 16, 1864.

Along the lines by old Bermuda,
The Southern army lay—
And men to men were sadly telling
How wrath had ruled the day—
And comrades true had bravely fallen
Amidst the battle dread,
Ere back the foe, dismayed and broken,
Before our charge had fled.

The stars of night were gently smiling
In sweet compassion down—
And filmy clouds, like folded mantles,
Now pines and willows crown;
And down beneath the shelt'ring forest
Each weary soldier laid—
Around him drew his thin-worn blanket,
And rest and dreams essayed.

But, hark! as speed the hooded hours,
  Where Butler holds the dell,
Rude guns disturb the midnight silence
  With spurt of flame and shell;
Like phrensied fiends, to wrath on-rushing,
  They crash athwart the pines—
First hiss and blaze and hurtle fiercely,
  Then burst above our lines.

Yet little recks the sleeping soldier
  For hurtling shell, or foe,
In dreams his willing feet are turning
  The halls of Long Ago—
The school, the home, the gentle mother,
  Rise up before his gaze—
And now he meets a coy, fair maiden,
  His friend of other days.

'Tis sweet to dream, when dreams are joyful,
  Though dangers lower, the while;
'Tis bliss to trace the pathway backward,
  Where scenes of childhood smile;
O, might such dreams forever linger!
  O, might the moments stay!
Why turn the stars so quickly westward?
  Why comes so soon the day?

Ah! blissful dreams are soonest scattered—
  The fairest rose soon dies—
When hearts would fain dream on forever,
  Storms first disturb the skies;
Sharp through the camp calls loud the bugle—
  The friendly night hath sped—
The soldier's sleep in rudely broken,
  His happy dreams are fled!

The Battery is ordered to another point, and we march in an hour. Good-by.

Your friend, B.

[The Federal gunboats, having been strangely silent throughout the whole of the day of the 16th, though they might have annoyed our army very much, after nightfall, kept up a constant shelling of the woods and fields, where they supposed the Confederate lines to be drawn, and, at times, their missiles became troublesome to the men. It is not pleasant to have a blazing shell crashing through the tree-tops over one's head, and broken limbs falling down, when one is trying to sleep at night. But these were literal realities on this occasion. Such are some of the minor dangers of war. Yet men will throw themselves down anywhere and sleep soundly, amidst such surroundings. The verses in the above letter were inspired by having been an eye-witness to these scenes, on the lines before Bermuda, on the night of May 16, 1864.

While Butler had been trying to find a way into Richmond and had failed, Grant had been pegging away against Lee to the same end, and he, too, had failed. But the great and bloody battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna and others, had been fought, and Grant was slowly mining his way nearer and nearer to the Confederate Capital. His army was approaching the vicinity of Richmond on the northeast, and we had orders to cross over to the northern side of the James. We then began a series of marches and counter-marches, crossing the James at the pontoon bridge, a little above Drewry's Bluff, several times within ten or twelve days. We camped or bivouacked here and there and anywhere,

sometimes two or three miles from the river, or from other troops, and sometimes under the range of the big shells from the gunboats. After the defeat of Butler's land forces, his war-boats became busy, both day and night, in shelling the country on both sides of the river, as far out as their missiles could reach. They wasted a big lot of ammunition to no purpose, for I never heard or saw of the least damage that any of their shells did anywhere. After the second battle of Cold Harbor, Lightfoot's Battalion was, of course, thrown in Lee's army, and we remained permanently on the north side of the James, and with the left wing of the army during the remainder of the war. But of the battle of Cold Harbor, and our near approach to an encounter with some of Grant's army, see the next letter.]

LETTER THIRTY-EIGHTH.

On the march—Condition of the horses—Drewry's Bluff hill—Battle of Cold Harbor—Grant crossing the Chickahominy—Note.

BOTTOM'S BRIDGE, VA.,
June 14, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—Since my last letter, three weeks ago, we have been on the march nearly all the time, on picket or in bivouac at seven or eight points—all places without name or inhabitant. Generally, we have been in close proximity to the enemy, but have exchanged no shots with them. Their gunboats, however, are constantly shelling the country right and left, night and day, and their big explosives oblige us sometimes to move further off.

Since the 6th of May, the Battery horses have been worked so hard, and the supply of forage often short, that the poor creatures are now low in flesh. Besides, in the several engagements, we have lost a number, so that we have not now the usual complement of six horses to a gun, the supply being reduced to four to some of them. It is necessary at times, therefore, for the cannoneers to have to spring to the wheels, and help the cannon out of a mudhole or up a steep hill.

Now, Drewry's Bluff hill, the one leading down to the pontoon from the Fort, is one of the steepest and

hardest pulls the horses have had to encounter anywhere. And as we have been over it a good many times recently, and sometimes in rain, which makes the condition of the hill worse, the horses have had a hard time making their way up, with all the help the cannoneers could give them. And, of course, there are some men who complain heavily at having to help the horses. Some of them say, if the Government is going to make horses of *them*, they want a set of harness. I think the cannoneers will never quite forget that hill at old Drewry's Bluff, and the hard labor they have had there, pushing at the wheels to help the horses along, the wheels, in the meantime, encased in mud, and the clay of the hill made soap-like and slippery from rain. There is danger in it to the men, as well as hard and hand-soiling work.

The fortification of Drewry's Bluff is built upon the aforesaid high hill, the highest point of land, I suppose, on the banks of the James river anywhere below Richmond. The hill towers up high over the channel of the river, which here runs very near inshore, and it forms an admirable place for a strong defensive work. The old Galena and the rest of the Federal fleet found it too strong for them, in May, 1862, and the best ironclads that Butler has here now do not meddle much with the place. It is a strong defensive work, and the gate to the Capital of the Confederacy by water.

Grant, with his grand army of 150,000, all amply equipped for offensive warfare, has been trying his

highest skill, and best strategic art, to overpower or outgeneral "Marse" Bob, from the 6th of May to the present, but about all he has been able to do so far, has been to execute a series of wonderful en echelons by the left flank—by the left flank from the wilderness to Cold Harbor and the muddy Chickahominy. A series of battles as terrible as any that have been fought during the progress of this war have occurred, and, with all his trying to pass Lee's flank, Lee keeps up with him, and his army is still between Grant and Richmond.

The last great battle was that of Cold Harbor, in which it is reported that the Federal army sustained an overwhelming defeat. All day long the noise of the battle—the roll of musketry and the booming of cannon—was plainly heard at our camp, and we were in constant expectation of orders to proceed in that direction. Since then Grant's army has apparently been taking a rest. But it is thought that Grant is about to change his base of operations, either to the York or to the James. Every crossing-place on the Chickahominy is being guarded by our forces, and Lightfoot's Battalion is scattered, by company or by section, at several points. Our Battery is now at Bottom's Bridge, thought to be the lowest fordable place on the upper or swamp-land portion of the river. There is one more crossing-place below us, between this point and Windsor Shade, at the head of tidewater navigation on this river. It is known as the Long Bridge, only no bridge is there now.

There is a Federal picket on the other side, in front of us here, but they keep very quiet. It is said that Sheridan's cavalry is over there, too. Wade Hampton's cavalry is just above us at the railroad crossing and above that. But all the troops are constantly changing positions. A report has just come up that Grant is crossing the Chickahominy at the Long Bridge. If so, it is strange no fighting has been going on down that way.

This point is fifteen or eighteen miles from the city, the battlefield of Seven Pines lying between us and town. While all the cannoneers are required to stay near by the guns, the drivers are employed most of the time each day in hunting around to find grazing for the horses. General Lee has just passed us here.

May heaven defend you and us.

Your friend, B.

[Grant's "change of base," after the battle of Cold Harbor, to the James river, with City Point as his headquarters, and the cities of Petersburg and Richmond as his objective points, of course, united General Lee's army and the forces that had been located about the two cities during the summers of '62 and '63, and up to the present time in '64, under one command. All became parts of Lee's army from this time on to the close of the war.

Our command, including the whole of Colonel Lightfoot's Artillery, remained north of the James constantly

after this, and shortly after this letter was written, the Battalion was ordered into camp within the inner lines near the city, where we remained until going into winter quarters.'

The next letter will relate principally to the events of two or three weeks spent in New Kent county, doing picket service on the extreme left.]

LETTER THIRTY-NINTH.

Picketing in New Kent—Unburied dead—A battle-scarred country—Corn bread only—Note.

NEW KENT, VA.,
June 30, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—Since my last letter to you, and since Grant's army has left these parts and crossed over to the James, we have been on picket duty over here in New Kent county, which, you know, lies between the Chickahominy and the Pamunkey rivers. We are distant from Richmond about twenty-five miles, and directly east from the city. We forded the Chickahominy at the railroad crossing, first laying a corduroy of poles to prevent the horses and guns from sinking into the mud. There are no Federals hereabouts now, as many thousands as were here a week ago. All have crossed over to the James.

No, I mistake; there *are* quite a number of Federals here around yet. But they are dead Federals. Or, rather, the most of them are negroes that had joined the Federal army, and were fighting against their former masters. And they are unburied negroes. They were some of Sheridan's lawless gang, and were killed in a cavalry engagement between Wade Hampton and Sheridan, that occurred about ten days ago. They have been left unburied, and scores of them are lying here,

festering and rotting under the rays of the hot summer's sun. It is a sickening sight. But there are no inhabitants, or, but very few, to be inconvenienced or endangered by the terrible stench, and so, as I suppose, they will lie and rot, and their bones will bleach here beneath the dews and suns of summer, even until "this cruel war," this heartless strife, is finally ended. Alas! the poor negro! how very little does the Federal army or the Northern people really care for him! In the army, they put him in the front rank, to be hewed down like sheep!— or they set him to work to dig trenches for the white soldiers to shelter under. We have several negro cooks, and I think the sight of their dead brethren here has opened their eyes a little.

This, indeed, and in very truth, is a battle-scarred country. Made desolate in the beginning of the war by the tread and the hate of two hundred thousand armed invaders, it has remained so, and will so continue, until Peace and Industry once more arise to cover it with the healing mantle of prosperity and repose. We all, my friend, have abundant cause to be thankful, yea, doubly thankful, that an invading host has not swept through Surry and Isle of Wight, with its besom of woe and destruction, as it has here in these counties on the east of Richmond, and on down to the bay and the sea. Could you witness the ruin that has been wrought wherever a Federal army has been, your heart, I know, would swell with gratitude that your section had escaped.

My heart goes out in sympathy and pity to the women and children and old men of New Kent and Charles City, and the other counties over here, who are forced refugees from their lands and once pleasant homes. But the ashes of a terrible desolation mark them now.

Do you suppose that the old soldiers of the South can ever forget these things?—that the picture of these blackened ruins will ever pass entirely from their memory?

But there is another matter that is troubling us now—that of food, something to eat. Rations are fearfully short and have been for sometime. The men have no money, and if they had any, there is nothing in this part of the State to buy. There are no crops, no gardens, nothing of anything like vegetables, fruit, fowls, or eggs. It is a barren country. And since the arrival of Lee's army, which has to be rationed from the two cities, it seems that our commissary department is entirely unable to furnish anything like the proper amount of bread and meat to feed us. It has been three weeks since our Command—the Battalion—tasted meat. And flour we have not had in sometime. It is only corn meal now, a short pound per day to each man, and this has been our sole fare for more than two weeks. Corn-pone only, made into dough with all the husk and litter it may contain, three times a day! No; not

three times. There is never enough of it for three meals a day, and many a time the men will cook the whole day's ration and eat it all at one time! Yea, and do not have enough then. These are literal facts.

It well-nigh makes our good-natured Commissary Sergeant weep to go to town for rations and have to return with nothing for the men but just plain corn meal. They say it is the best they can do for us now. But they could hardly do much worse.

Picture to yourself, if you can, a company of soldiers, all seated around in small groups, each group constituting a "mess," and all munching away upon corn bread only—nothing but corn bread to eat. It may be, there is some show at hilarity and mirth, for it is a dark day indeed in camp, if some soldier cannot evoke mirth out of something. But there is apparent an undercurrent of unrest, of dissatisfaction, of some want or desire unsupplied, which, if not expressed in words, is manifest in the faces and manner of the men. They cannot help it. Hunger will tell. And while bread alone will appease the appetite for a time, it will not continue to do so indefinitely. But we have passed through such dearths before, and fondly hope this one is nearly over.

Besides, we have orders to return at once to Bottom's Bridge, and we like that much better than staying here. All is quiet about here. No Federals are near us anywhere that we can hear of. They have left the mud and mosquitoes of the Chickahominy for the broader James

and the turgid Appomattox. And Petersburg is to be now the storm-centre of the war in Virginia. May the cloud soon recede, spanned by the rainbow of peace.

Your friend, B.

[The period of three or four weeks covering the transition of General Lee's army from Cold Harbor to the lines before Petersburg, may, very properly, be called "the starving time" of the army. It was a time of scarcity that was felt everywhere by all the people, out of the army as well as in it. The time had passed by when the men were receiving boxes from home. Fortunately, through the great exertions of the provision department of the army, better and more liberal supplies were shortly afterward obtained and continued even up to near the close. At no time afterward were we obliged to subsist for so long a time on nothing to eat but corn bread. And generally we had beef. As the fall and winter of '64 approached and the tax-in-kind began to be collected, the supplies furnished the army became more liberal and in greater variety. It is wonderful how the supplies department managed to do as well as it did.]

LETTER FORTIETH.

Return to the city—Our summer camp—View of the city—Richmond the Mecca of the South—Often on picket—Note.

RICHMOND, VA.,
Aug. 15, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—Well, we are back here again, in view of the dear old city. Our camp is in a large and beautiful oak grove, on the northeastern environs of the town, and quite near the Confederate cemetery of Oakwood. The three Batteries are all camped together. The ground is dry and smooth, with ample shade, and wood enough for cooking purposes. It is a very pleasant place, either for a summer or a winter camp. We are near the inner line of defences, and convenient to the roads leading to the outer defences. The Battalion has roll calls and drills at the same hour, and the Battalion bugler—a negro—sounds the calls for all the Companies.

There meanders near us a fine, rocky stream, which affords a good watering place for the horses. And there is a grist-mill nearby, and a small pond, which, being in a retired nook, presents a capital bathing place for the men. Altogether, we are admirably located for personal comfort, if only they will let us remain here.

The view of the city from our camp, while partly obstructed by intervening groves and timber, is exten-

sive and beautiful. There is also some fine scenery on the eastern and northeastern outskirts, and the farther-off rural prospects. The more I see of the city, the more I am convinced what a grand metropolis our National Capital is. It is a queenly city.

And this is the Capital of the Southern Confederacy. This the city for which so much noble blood has been shed, so many brave lives sacrificed, to defend it from the despoiling and desecrating hand of a vandal foe. It is the devoted Capital against whose walls have been dashing and leaping the angry waves of war for four terrible years. It is the place where Southern heroism and devotion, from whatever State it might come, whether from far-off Texas, the pearl of the Southwest, or nearby Maryland, the queen of the Chesapeake—from the land of the Rio Grande or the soil of the Potomac; it is the centre where Southern patriotism has congregated, to lay its richest treasures, and test its most sacred honor and fidelity to the principles it believes to be true.

> "Where the noisy James, with ceaseless song,
> Leaps o'er its jagged falls,
> A nation's strength and bravery throng,
> To guard her sacred walls."

Richmond is the Mecca of the South; the sacred tomb where so many hundreds of her heroes sleep. Here around, on a hundred battlefields, they rest from their toils—in a hundred wayside cemeteries they here

repose in peace—here in Hollywod and Oakwood they lie—all guarding still the hallowed halls and consecrated fanes of this politically holy ground. No matter what the final result of this war may be, for every true Southern heart this noble city must ever possess an interest and attraction superior to any other place in the Southern Confederacy. Here the men of every Southern State have fought side by side, and seen their comrades fall and die. Here the sick and the wounded of every commonwealth have languished in hospital and received the tender ministrations of the devoted women of the city.

And now the tide of war has rolled hitherward again, and tens of thousands of war-scarred veterans of Dixie Land to-day stand between these hallowed walls and thirty miles of bristling bayonets in hostile hands, and the ten thousand ponderous cannon that are daily and nightly belching forth fire and death, and hate and destruction, that they may level down and desecrate and trample upon these shrines, so dear to the heart of every mother and child in the Confederacy.

Of course, my friend, there is no rest for us while the bloody drama lasts. Our pleasant camp may soon be given up, for the foe is ever alert and active. We are often out on picket duty, a part or a whole Battery at a place. The enemy's cavalry are first on this side of the river and then on the other, hoping to gain the advantage somewhere.

I have recently been out to Gaines's Mill, and on to Cold Harbor, the scene of the late mighty slaughter of

man by man. Two words describe it all—*horror, desolation.* Details need not to be given. It is too heart-rending.

There is a melancholy interest in looking around at the graves in Oakwood—the new burial ground set apart for the Confederate soldiers who die in the hospitals in the city. The space is extensive, but it is filling up rapidly. Many hundred soldiers lie here. The hospitals are all full of sick or wounded men, and many of them die. Our Company has four men buried here.

But I am on duty to-day, and must bid you adieu. May God keep you safe to the end.

Your friend, B.

[The following are the four comrades referred to in this letter, as being interred at Oakwood: Zacheriah Holland and Edward W. Wright, both of Surry county, and both wounded on May 7th, 1864, at Walthall Station, while serving at the same gun; Josiah Gwaltney, of Isle of Wight, an amiable youth, not twenty years old, who died of fever, July, 1864; and James Pond, of Sussex county, a youth, who lost an arm at Fort Stephens, May 14, 1864, and who died of pneumonia at Chimborazo hospital one month later.

Now let the ivy and the pine
  Their mortal dust enscreen,
And round their names the wreath entwine
  Of everlasting green.

I trust that my former comrades will not think my soldier-boy eulogy of the city of Richmond too extravagant. I believe what I wrote of it then was but the spontaneous feeling of every Southern heart. I cannot see how the place where one's relatives fought, suffered and bled can be otherwise than dear to them—how the soil where one's kindred sleep can ever cease to possess a sacred interest to surviving friends. The heroic struggle that was made there for Southern liberty by the men of every State, and its final failure, after the expenditure of so many lives, must ever invest the queen city of the James with a solemn and a mournful interest, that is yet tender and touching to the feelings of every true son and daughter of Dixie land. Time should not destroy this regard for the soil where so many of the fallen braves of the South are reposing in their last, long sleep. Indeed, as the fleet-footed years pace by, this love should increase and grow tenderer, truer, stronger, holier. To that Mecca let the pilgrimages of future years be turned, while men love liberty, or honor Statehood rights, or possess the manhood to lift a hand against invasion.]

LETTER FORTY-FIRST.

Picketing around—The "poetry of war"—Frequent exchange of shots—No news from home—Note.

RICHMOND, VA.,
Sept. 15, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—We are yet located at the pleasant summer camp I told you about in my last letter. That is, it remains our headquarters. But some part, or all of the Company—except "Company Q," which always remains behind to guard the camp—is almost constantly out, doing picket duty at some threatened or exposed point. We have no idea, when we turn in to rest at night, that we will be permitted to "sleep out our full sleep" until morning.

There is hardly an acre of ground from Richmond to Petersburg, or from the James to the Chickahominy, that we have not been over a dozen times. And we scarcely go a mile without passing some spot where we have before slept or bivouacked. The River road, the Williamsburg road, the Darbytown road, (Enroughty, they spell it here), the Nine-mile road, the Mechanicsville road, the Brook turnpike, the Military roads, and almost every other road, lane, by-path, and alley about here are quite familiar to us. We can go anywhere on the darkest night without mishap.

But there is precious little fun in this ceaseless tramping around from pillar to post, and from post back to pillar again. And if, as is often the case, we make the march at night, through rain, mud and slush, it is anything but romantic. As a regiment of infantry was plunging along through the mud, on the Military road, one night recently, I heard a fellow exclaim: "This knocks the poetry out of war, don't it?" I thought so, too. But the expression will serve to show you what good-natured, tough, invincible material the Southern soldier is made of. No adversity can down him. He never gives up entirely. The only way you can conquer him is to kill him. Such, my friend, is the life of the soldier when not in battle—when on the march, or on the outer posts.

Frequently, while out on these outpost expeditions, the enemy comes in sight, and we send them over a shell or two, just to let them know the old soldier is yet at his post. So far, nobody in our Company has been hurt recently. Gun No. 3, while lately on the lines near Roper's farm, had a piece knocked off the muzzle by the impact of a Federal shell, which exploded just as it struck the gun. None of the men were hurt. But Lieutenant Barham, who was in charge, quickly responded with one or two 12-pound Napoleons, and the Federals withdrew.

Other guns and sections of our Battery have, at times recently, exchanged shots with the enemy, as some of their scouting party appeared. The other Batteries also

are frequently engaged with them. Hampton's cavalry and all the rest, is down on the south side of Petersburg now, and the artillery here is performing both cavalry and artillery duty at the same time. The conscript fathers and the old guard have also to turn out sometimes.

It has been several weeks since we had news from home. The Federals have pushed their lines so far to the south of Petersburg that communication is cut off from the lower counties of the Southside, except by the circuitous route via Hicksford, Jerusalem and Ivor. I trust that, at least, this line will be kept open, and that the mail will pass regularly, so that our men will not be deprived of the pleasure of hearing from home. These letters from home are, I assure you, of priceless value to all the men, for there is scarcely one who does not have some friend with whom to correspond. But I have no idea when this letter will reach you, or when I will hear from home again.

Well, all is in God's hands. The private has only to fight and pray. Believing that our cause is just, in God we trust, and fight, and wait, and hope.

Your friend, B.

[This letter will exhibit to the sons, daughters and friends of the S. L. A. a living picture of our soldier life during the closing months of 1864, when the armies of Lee and Grant were grappling together like two giants, each spreading out on the flanks, and seeking

to overflow and encoil the other—and when both cavalry and artillery were ever on the go—cavalry often performing the duty of infantry, and the artillery of cavalry. It was active duty on the skirmish line, or outpost, or picket. And while there was practically but little hard fighting, there was great need for alertness and watchfulness at every hour, day and night. And especially was it required of every man on guard at night, that he be more than commonly watchful and cautious, lest the enemy approach him unobserved. It was a time of exposure to the weather also. We would have no shelter from the rains, or scarcely a chance for cooking the few rations that we had. The shifts the boys sometimes made to cook a piece of beef, or knead a bit of dough and get it baked, would seem like a tale of myth or fancy. It was a stirring, active, wearing life. It tested the physical endurance to the utmost. None but the best and most resolute could keep at his post, and the hospitals were crowded with men.]

LETTER FORTY-SECOND.

Ceaseless boom of cannon—The flight and bursting of a shell—Recruits—Deserters—Note.

RICHMOND, VA.,
October 15, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—The steady, ceaseless boom of the big cannon on the Federal gunboats in the James, has become a striking feature of the siege, and it is monotonous already. At regular intervals of one or two minutes, every hour almost, day and night, the boom of a cannon is heard down on the James. And then, after a few seconds, comes the report of the bursting shell, a mile or two out on the land, either on this side or the other side of the river. And if one is near enough, he may see the huge missiles, like nail kegs, as they speed through the air, and he may hear the fragments of the shell as they tear through the tree-tops in the forest, or fall here and there around him.

It is interesting to watch the flight of those shells, and to note the little cloud of white smoke that forms in the atmosphere where a shell explodes. The smoke at first collects in a rounded mass, and then slowly fades from view. It does not float off on the wind like any other cloud, but vanishes slowly from sight, a picture of all that is human. The Federals waste an untold amount of ammunition in this way to no pur-

pose whatever. The soldiers regard the shells with supreme indifference. Many a time, a shell bursting overhead, evokes no remark or notice from the men.

Recently we have had several names added to our roster, but I fear that the most of these late recruits are poor material for serviceable men. "Substitutes" and men "whipped in" are not likely to become effective soldiers. Some of these men may be worse than worthless to our cause—they may be spies. It is an easy matter, and only a short walk, to reach the Federal lines now. I fear that our authorities are not as careful as they should be in regard to these eleventh-hour laborers. They may be here—some of them, at least—to gain what information they can, and then desert us.

But we have had recruits during the present year from our home counties, of men that we knew something about, and these, in most cases, proved to be some of our best and most effective men. The most of them came in during the early part of the year, before the Butler campaign began, and have done good service since they came. They are but youths, boys just arrived at military age, and are volunteers, coming in of their own volition—neither substitutes, conscripts, or "whipped in" men. They have made an honorable record.

But the others—our Company would have been better off without them. Some have deserted us already. They got their money and stayed long enough to be

counted, and vanished—and where? Are they skulking? or have they gone to the enemy? or were any of them spies?

Well, all is well that ends well. We will hope and fight on to the end.

Your friend, B.

[The following good and serviceable men came to us in 1864, mostly before the active operations of the summer began, and they shared in the battles and toils of the remainder of the war:

James S. Avery and William Holt Berryman, from Surry county; Fidding A. Coakley, from Richmond, a brother of Dr. J. B. Coakley, physician for the Battalion; John Hankins, from Surry, a brother of Captain J. D. Hankins; Robert James, from Surry, enlisted in February, 1864, our "Uncle Bob;" Robert H. Jones, from Surry county; James N. Matthews, from Surry, under the military age when enlisted; James Pond, from Sussex county, wounded May 14, died in July; Joel J. Presson, from Southampton, under the military age; Henry W. Rogers, from Surry county; Julian A. Stewart, from Surry, painfully wounded May 16; William S. Underwood, from Surry; George Waggoner, from Highland county, a good man and serviceable soldier; and Samuel D. Warren, from Surry, who enlisted in February.]

LETTER FORTY-THIRD.

In winter quarters again—Clothing—Rations—Both armies rest—Courtesies along the lines—Note.

CAMP HENRICO, VA.,
Nov. 15, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—The army has gone into winter quarters once more, the fourth time since the war began. Some of the barracks are better, some worse, according as the material was at hand to build them. It would furnish object lessons in construction and ornament to an architect to go around to the different camps, and note the various wonderful designs and figures in the art of carpentry that are to be seen. Elaborate or beautiful they are not. Original, unique, grotesque they are. They are picturesque also, and all more or less serviceable as the temporary abodes of men who have no furniture to speak of, and but one object for a shelter over them, namely, *comfort.* Most of them are fairly comfortable, as soldiers' barracks. Our men have built them good log cabins, and we are near a forest, where there is plenty of fuel for fires.

Our camping-place this time is near the Nine-mile road leading out eastwardly from the Capital, and we are four miles from the suburbs of the city. The cabins are covered with slabs, but have no plank floors, and the bunks are placed on the sides of the cabins, one

above another. We had no nails to fasten the roofs, and so the slabs are held in place by logs laid on top. Of course, the cabins are rough and unsightly enough, nothing like the neat ones that we had at Camp Pemberton, in the winter of '61-'62, when we had both plank and nails furnished us, and tools to work with.

But these are much better than no cabins at all, and we are thankful enough that we have them. Many commands have only cloth tents to shelter them, and not wood enough for fires. Our horses, too, have good stalls, while some of the cavalry commands have no shelters for their horses. General Gary's cavalry, however, to which command we are attached now, and whose camp is near us, have good stalls for horses, and warm cabins for the men.

If only the men had warm and comfortable clothing, fit to protect them from the inclemency of the winter, and even half as much rations as were furnished us in 1861, we would fare well enough, even royally, so far as creature comforts go. But, alas! both of these highly-essential "sinews of war" are conspicuous mostly for their absence. Supplies of every sort are growing scarcer and scarcer all the time, and we need both warm garments and blankets, and more of food. Many of the men have no overcoats, and some no blankets. And the present supply of footgear is discreditable in the extreme.

Both armies appear to have tacitly agreed to take a rest, and everything has been quiet for some time.

Even the big guns on the fleet have stopped their booming. The Federals, no doubt, are fixing up good, warm barracks for all the men, infantry, artillery and cavalry. They have ample supplies and means, and all the world to draw upon. Why should they stint themselves? After so much and such stubborn fighting, the armies may well pause for a good, long rest. Both sides are growing tired of war, but the fanatics at the North keep the men in the field, and the war goes on. Were it left solely and exclusively to the men in the two armies, I believe peace would be made before Christmas.

The men on picket along the lines often meet and exchange such things as they may have to part with—tobacco or peanuts, on the part of the Confederates; coffee or bacon on the Federal side. There is a tacit agreement on both sides that no one is to shoot while these exchanges are going on. When orders come for shooting to begin, the men inform the other side, and then all hasten to get behind their breastworks.

Such is one of the better phases and experiences of soldier-life in the trenches. It shows that humanity is not clean dead in the soldier's heart.

May hope and safety be with you forever.

Your friend, B.

[There is said to be abundant evidence that, since the failure of both Grant and Butler to capture Richmond, and after the merciless slaughter of so many of his

men, that marked Grant's battles from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor, a feeling contrary to the continuance of the war began to prevail and grow, both at the North and in the Northern army in the field. Be this as it may, it is the firm belief of the writer that, could General Lee's army have been properly recruited, clothed and provisioned during the winter of '64-'65, General Grant's army would have been checked in its advance beyond the Weldon railroad, and the abandonment of Richmond would not have occurred. In spite of the terrible losses at the South, the lines here before the two cities would have continued intact, and Grant, as well as Butler, would have been penned up on his base of supplies. It all hinged upon the question of men and means to meet and check the foe.]

LETTER FORTY-FOURTH.

The paymaster around—Prices—Health of the Company—Furloughs—Absentees—Note.

CAMP HENRICO, VA.,
Dec. 15, 1864.

My Dear Friend:—Good news! The paymaster has been around again, and the men now have four months' pay in their pockets! And the hucksters are driving a good trade with their "pies an' things." Hucksters? Yes, there are retail venders of things to eat, still going the round of the camps, though it is hard to tell where they get their supplies from. Gingerbread—sweetened with sorghum molasses—dried-apple pies, sweet potatoes at ten cents apiece, boiled beans at twenty-five cents a plate, a chicken wing or leg at ten cents, one baked apple at five cents—such are some of the articles they sell, and the prices they charge for them, all in Confederate money, of course. The sight of a silver dime would frighten a negro huckster half to death now.

But what are twelve dollars a month, Confederate money, to the prices of things that prevail now? The two are out of all proportion. If the Government only would scale up and pay us en ratio with the times, things would be more equal. How are the families of soldiers that reside in towns to live on this pay? But I am not complaining.

The health of the Company is excellent; I believe it was never better at any time. None are in the hospital, and no case of much significance in Camp—only a chill now and then, or colds, and wheezes and sneezes.

And—so quiet is everything along the lines, and in the enemy's camps—even furloughs are allowed now. But somehow, by some sort of rule, they are taking the names from the last end of the list, down at the zeds and zees, the wyes and tees, and the Williamses and the Waggoners, the Wrights and the Whites, are getting them all, for we have a big bunch of these names. We have one man named Waggoner, who came to us either from the conscript camp, or from a company of roughs that had been made up somewhere of men from nowhere, so to speak, and who succeeded in getting a transfer to the S. L. A. He says the men of the other company were too rough for him; he could not stand them. They handled him badly, because he was a "tender-foot." Waggoner is a good man, moral, sober, quiet, and faithful to all his duties, and the men all like him and respect him. But Waggoner is from Highland county, over between the Shenandoah and the Alleghany mountains, and on the border of West Virginia. And he has just got a furlough and has gone home. The boys posed him a good deal with questions before he left, and when he departed they all bid him a kind good-by, and told him they knew they would never see him again. And some of them pretended to weep a little. Such are some of the good-natured comic scenes that are ever taking place.

We have a number of absentees, who are away from the Company without permission. They are mostly from the new recruits, the substitutes, and no one has any idea where to look for them. One or two may have crossed the Potomac over into Maryland. Some may have gone home and joined the skulkers; and some may have deserted. I would not write thus of any of the older men. They stick, and are here to stay to the end of the war, "let the big guns boom as they will."

Many of the higher officers of the commands around us here—of Gary's Cavalry, especially—have secured winter quarters in private residences, either taking homes that were unoccupied, or a set of rooms where the families still remain. Thus they are fixed out in quite home-like style, are living comfortably, and have plenty. Our own officers might have done the same, but they have not. They are here with the men, and "mess" and room with the privates.

Three of our men have been transferred to other commands during the year now near its close. George W. Armistead, who came to us from Richmond, I believe, in 1863, has passed into the Richmond Naval Department as a teacher. He is an educated man, a mathematician, and was needed in the other branch of the service. Marion Messersmith has gone to Company H, 13th Virginia Cavalry. And Lewis L.

Turner, a noted character with us, has obtained a transfer to the Richmond navy, and is serving on one of the ironclads lying there.

May the holy angels guard the homes and loved ones of all the soldiers, and keep us in the army safe from harm to the end.

Your friend, B.

[It will not be amiss, perhaps, to make here a special note in relation to Lewis L. Turner—"Turner L." as the boys called him. He was indeed a noted character, and, I suppose, no man in the Company ever gave Captain Hankins and the rest of the officers more trouble than "Turner L." He was a native of Isle of Wight county, but was living in North Carolina when the war began. He joined a North Carolina company, and was at the battle of Big Bethel, June 10, 1861. He came to us in the winter of '61-'62, and remained until some time in 1864, when he transferred to the navy.

"L. L.," or "Turner L.," was a sharp-witted, and withal, quite an intelligent man. He was an expert "forager" and a "blockade runner" of the first class. While the Company lay around Richmond, he paid almost nightly visits to the city, and was often on double duty or undergoing some severer punishment for his frequent absences from roll calls. In fact, he was often in a scrape of some kind, not quite bad

enough, perhaps, for a court-martial, and yet demanding some severity. He became well acquainted with the inside of "Castle Thunder," and, in fact, passed a good deal of his time there. Though an able man physically, he did very little service for the Confederacy. He lived several years after the war, and married and settled in Southampton county.

I regret that I cannot add here a note in relation to the post war history of Armistead and Messersmith. They appear to have wandered off into other parts, and I have not been able to hear from them, or to learn if they are yet living.

Deducting the losses of the Company for the year 1864, by transfers, deaths and absentees, our numerical strength at the end of that year should have been about 125.]

LETTER FORTY-FIFTH.

The winter of '64-'65—No prayer meetings—Reading and sport—The cannon's boom again—Beef and biscuit—One meal a day—Note.

CAMP HENRICO, VA.,
Feby. 10, 1865.

My Dear Friend:—The present winter has dragged its slow length along in very equable mood, with no extremely cold spells or great storms of snow, and with a goodly number of mild and pleasant days. We have had some rain and sleet since February came in, but the men have passed the winter thus far in much better comfort than was anticipated when we came here in December. There is an old English saying that, "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," and perhaps He has tempered the winter to the thin-clad soldiers, for many of our men are but sorrily clad, and few of them have overcoats. And good shoes or boots, and woolen socks are greatly needed. Such a thing as a dress-parade would be out of the question now. The officers would be ashamed to exhibit such a rag-a-muffin, tatter-demalion set as the average private would make. Such a thing as a whole uniform is rarely to be seen.

Yet the boys do not take it much to heart because of their rags, but sing their songs and have their sports and fun, just as earnestly as though they were the

best clad fellows in the land. Many of them have learned to patch quite neatly, and we have some men that could pass an examination for tailors. In fact, one of our boys has had his wedding suit of Confederate gray made for him by one of the Company. And it was pronounced by all to have been a good job. But I reckon you would laugh heartily if you were to see *some* of the odd patches that *some* of the boys stitch on. The most of them never think of cutting out the old rent to set in a patch, but they stitch the piece on over the old cloth, which, of course, makes a bungle of it all. They say it makes the clothes warmer to set the patches on top the old cloth, and it is easier work.

But hardships and short rations seem to make the men hardier and more able to endure privations, cold weather, exposure, etc. The majority of the men are in vigorous health, and ready for any service. Instead of repining at their sufferings, I believe the men are really thankful that it is no worse with them than it is. If one of the men were to get sad and mope around with a long face, the rest would pose and tease him half to death for it. One may see more cheerful faces in the army on the outer posts or in the trenches, than anywhere else in our land.

There has been a great lack of prayer-meeting services in the camps around us this winter. There has not been a single evangelist around here or, I suppose, in Gary's whole command, since we came into winter

quarters. Some of our own men assemble occasionally at night for singing, and every one who desires it has plenty of good reading matter—tracts, papers, books, Testaments. There is a goodly supply of religious books in camp. But books make dead weight for baggage, and are not allowed to be put in with the essentials when we move or start out on a march.

The gunboats that crowd the James are thawing out of the ice again, and once more the boom, boom of the big guns is daily repeating its harsh and monotonous reverberations from river to wood, and back from wood to river. It seems like a silly waste of material, for not one shell in five hundred does the least harm to any one. May be the Federals think they will keep "the Rebs" at a respectful distance from their lines by this means.

By some piece of good fortune, our Commissary Sergeant managed recently to get a supply of nice fat beef, and good, sure-enough flour—two articles that have depreciated much in quantity and quality the last twelve-month. And if ever you saw a fellow's face radiant with smiles, it was that of the said Commissary when he road into camp that day with the wagon loaded with the said beef and flour. Milton does like to do a good part by the boys when he can, and the beef and flour that we have been getting for ever so long have been so inferior, that the men had about lost faith in Milton as a successful commissary.

But this good haul saved his reputation, and brought smiles to many more faces than Milton's; and soon the compliments were rolling in upon him at a lively rate. And very soon every "mess" in camp was making elaborate preparations for a liberal meal of "beef and biscuits," or boiled beef and "pot-dodgers."

Our friends at home, though lacking many things they formerly enjoyed, yet doubtless have their three full meals each day. But, I tell you that the Southern soldier would regard himself as very fortunate indeed if he could always be sure of even one square meal a day. He would gladly take that one of just plain "beef and biscuit" without any pretense at dessert. Other things would be but superfluities. He would laugh and sing, and grow fat, and fight the Federals like Trojans on that. Fill up Lee's ranks again to one hundred thousand men, and give them all though but one full meal a day of good beef and biscuit, and they would bid defiance to all the forces the Northern despot could pit against them.

After the "messes" had all eaten their fill once more, many a Richard felt that he was "himself again," and ready for any emergency. And more than one humble private audibly thanked God for "one more square meal." And there was a whole "camel's load" of gratitude in the words, for, I tell you that scrimp dinners, rather than full ones, has been the rule in Lee's army for many a long month.

It is the recital of such things that alone can give you a just and accurate conception of the actual needs and privations and self-denials of the Southern soldier in this struggle for State rights and native soil unprofaned by the vandal's heel. All General Lee's army needs to be invincible is more men and more of beef and biscuit. With these and their indomitable spirit, Lee's men would soon clear the State of every foe.

Your friend, B.

[Perhaps my old comrade and warm friend, John H. Bell, will bear me out about that nice tailor-built suit that he made for M. A. Delk, some time during the war—and how proud Matt was when it was finished and he got his furlough to go home. That was a red-letter day for Matt, one of the happiest of his life, no doubt—one to which he will ever look back with pride and thankfulness—thankfulness for the happy results that led out of it, and gratitude that his life was spared through the war, and that he has been permitted to enjoy so many years of peace and happiness since then. Very few of the boys, I fear, will be able to recall such a pleasant reminiscence as this of our friend Matt's.

I can recall few things of any particular importance that occurred at our Camp during this, our fourth and last, winter spent in the service of the Confederate States. Both armies remained very quiet all winter.

We had but little of sickness among the men, and we were located rather too far from town for the few incorrigible "blockade runners" there were still in the Company to venture out often. "Turner L." was gone, transferred to the navy, and he had been the ring-leader among the half-dozen men of the Company that might be set down as our worst "blockaders." I think there must have been less shirking of duty, more of good conduct and kindliness among the men, and fewer calls for discipline than had been the case any previous winter of the war. Even our magpie, Joseph Kea, was less noisy than ever he had been before. But "Tom the fiddler" was not with us now, for Joe to worry and exasperate into fever-heat all the time. Poor man! he had passed over the river, and was beyond the reach of any earthly trouble. As I look back and think of our life in camp, a feeling of regret comes to me that something more had not been done by the men to render the life of that man happier and sweeter. I fear his light went out in a darkness that might have been made a little less dark, if only a little more of brotherly kindness had been shown him.

And Waggoner had not returned. His time was out, but he had not reported for duty. He never did. Perhaps the preponderance of union sentiment and talk, when he got home, was too much for him; he had to remain. Or, perhaps, he was held a prisoner and not allowed to return. No one will ever know. Yet, I am very sure that he was not a bad man, or false to his

State. For him the S. L. A. will entertain kindly feelings, and register his name on our bead-roll of honor as one who did his duty well while with us.

I do not recall a single Battalion drill or inspection as having occurred during this winter. And the paymaster never came around again after that visit in December, '64. It really made but little difference. We were penniless soldiers, and likely to remain so to the end, for the paper they gave us had but little purchasing value for anything that was worth buying. Two months more from the date of this letter, reached the end of it as money.]

LETTER FORTY-SIXTH.

Butler's ditch—Our idle iron-clads—Pushing around the flank—Southern railroad cut—Grant's railroad—And his towers—Note.

CAMP HENRICO, VA.,
March 10, 1865.

My Dear Friend:—We have heard rumors several times during the last four or five months, that Butler has been digging—or is having dug—a great ditch or canal at the place on the James river known as "the Dutch Gap," and it is reported that it is completed, and is a real success. By a short cut of one hundred yards, all that long bend in the James of several miles around Curle's Neck, is obviated, and boats pass through easily to the upper part of the Neck without having to go around it.

Now, if this is reliable news, it is the cleverest thing that Butler has done in these parts since his arrival here, the first of May of last year. If it is true, he has done something of value, to perpetuate his name and fame to posterity. Virginia and Richmond, in future years, will thank Butler for his gratuitous service. If the canal is really a success, it will be a perpetual benefit to the navigation of the James for all time to come.

What advantage the Federals hope to realize, however, from the said ditch, is not so clear. It will not

put their iron-clads above Drewry's Bluff, and that, after all, is the military key to Richmond by water. It is hard to see the military value of the great canal, under the existing condition of things. Let him now undertake another canal, to put his fleet around and by the Bluff, and he will be there, and even Grant, I suppose, will thank him for his labors. After all, General Butler may succeed in winning immortality for himself, if he only has time and means enough allowed him. A canal around the Bluff should be his next move.

In the meantime, what are our four or five idle iron-clads, that are rusting in the dock at Richmond—what are they doing to make things lively for Butler, and help General Lee to check the advance on the Southern railroad below Petersburg? If only those same iron-mailed monsters could be induced to make a sudden dash, one fine morning before long, on the Federal fleet about Curle's Neck, and the aforesaid Butler's canal, they might stir up a little breeze that might be interesting to some one. They might win glory for themselves, and help our cause a good deal. And, in case they were beaten, the run back under the Bluff would be but a short one. They ought to try it, even though they sank for it. Such, at least, is the view one private takes of it.

The news comes that Grant is constantly pushing his lines around to the south and southwest of Petersburg. His forces already hold the Southern railroad, so that

important line of communication between Richmond and the South is severed, and General Lee is still crippled in his resources. Oh, for men to meet the emergency, and strike the enemy a telling blow!

And Grant has a railroad of his own, a sure-enough iron rail, all the way from City Point, around by the east and south of Petersburg, along the line that his army occupies. So vast are the resources and appliances of war at his command. They do not spare in means or men, but are lavish of both. But the Confederacy seems to be getting more and more impoverished, and is growing weaker and weaker every day. The hope of foreign recognition is about at an end, and the blockade of all our ports renders it impossible to secure the needed supplies.

And the Federals have built vast towers, or look-outs, at points upon their lines—a sort of frame-work, a hundred and fifty feet or more in height. And they send men up to the top of them to watch the movements of the Confederates, and spy out the weak points in the thin lines behind the breastworks. They do not use balloons, as did McClellan, but high wooden towers. In some cases they have fixed ladder-ways up to the top of tall trees, and use them as look-outs, for gaining information of all that is going on along General Lee's lines. The Federals are a resourceful people.

But they are invaders. They have come into our State with hostile intent. They are desolating our land, destroying our property, robbing our homes, burning

bridges, mills and churches. They seek to pauperize our people, to overpower and rule them. What ought we to do but to fight them? Yea, we will fight them to the bitter end. We need more Stuarts, more Mosbys, more Jacksons—men who know how to strike them at odd times and places, and in unexpected ways. We should not tie down too closely to West Point morals when fighting invaders. I would take the advantage of them in any way and manner possible. I would strike at their supply trains, shell their transports, cripple them in any way that might appear. What right have they on our soil? Should we not treat them as common robbers? Yea, arm the boys and the old men, and fight them to the bitter end. This is the dictate of common reason, the only course for a people who would be free. Shall we bow the neck to a foe so insolent and high-handed as these vandals?

I trust you will not imbibe the too gloomy and despondent tone in which I write. I believe there is hope for us yet. From the beginning of this struggle until now, I have ever entertained an abounding confidence in the ultimate success of the Southern cause. I hold that confidence still. The principles for which we contend, founded in truth, justice and right, are as eternal as the hills, and must prevail. There may be changes, revolutions, disasters, failures, but Statehood rights and personal liberty are invincible. Tyrants may arise, oppression may come, freedom and self-government may suffer long interregnums, but at last

the principles of the old constitution, as framed by the best wisdom of our fathers, *will be sustained.*

Let us take courage and struggle on. A brighter day will dawn. All is not lost. This is *our* land, and we will hold it. On this platform we will rise or fall.

Your friend, B.

[The reader will observe, from the date of the above letter, that the Confederacy was within two months of its dissolution. Of course, then, there was prevailing at the time an undertone of despondency in the army, and distrust in the ability of our Government to hold out a great while longer. The privates saw and felt this, and deplored it. But the collapse came sooner than was expected—and why? It was because of the very liberal—even generous—terms offered General Lee by General Grant. Had Grant's conditions been at all harsh or unreasonable, General Lee, I feel sure, never would have yielded as he did, but would have fought his way through the cordon that surrounded him. General Grant's terms of surrender was the occasion of the close of hostilities, at the time that it occurred. Had the tyrant, Stanton, been there to dictate measures, or any one else less tolerant than General Grant, the historian would never have heard of the surrender at Appomattox. Grant's clemency, his liberality, his generous treatment of General Lee, did more to end the war than his army ever could have done. The Army of Northern Virginia, though fearfully depleted

and torn, though ragged and hungry and despondent, had defied Grant's bullets, but it was won by his clemency.

One more letter that succeeded in winding its way around Grant's army, and in reaching finally the folks at home, is all that now remains to me in finishing out this narrative. After that I must resort to memory and a few notes that I made shortly after the close of the contest.]

LETTER FORTY-SEVENTH.

A circuitous mail route—But one line open—Richmond untenable—What then?—Note.

CAMP HENRICO, VA.,
March 20, 1865.

My Dear Friend:—Grant having pushed his lines across the Southern rail, and on into Dinwiddie, the mail route between Richmond and the lower counties of the Southside, even if a route can be kept open at all, is rendered still more circuitous and extended than before. Another way through Amelia, Nottoway and Brunswick, and on to Hick's Ford, as before, will, I suppose, be selected, and may be, in the course of an age or two, a letter from home may reach us, and an answer be returned. This will be very annoying to the men of the S. L. A. One great enjoyment to them, all along through their life in camp, has been the receipt of letters from home, messages from their friends and kindred, and if this pleasure is now to be denied, it will be a hard blow to them. Any mail route is far better than none at all. And if Grant's forces should be advanced so far south and west as to destroy the present line—and if it should still be the fortune of the S. L. A. to remain here on this side of the James—I would suggest a private line via the Chickahominy and Jamestown, and across into Surry, and so on into

Isle of Wight and the other counties. The plan would be feasible by making the crosses on the James at night in a small boat. One man with a pair of oars might work his way across in calm weather with perfect safety, despite the gunboats and other craft. But I trust that this letter, at least, will reach you before Grant's men get everywhere.

And so, there is but one line of railway communication open from Richmond to the South—the Danville. Of course, the Federals will aim to seize and destroy that, if possible. But they will not be likely to keep it cut permanently. Grant will hardly depart so far from his base of supplies on the James as the Danville. Unless he should invest Richmond on the south and west, which he might do by abandoning his present line, or a part of it.

In that case, Richmond becomes untenable, and doubtless will have to be given up. It could not be held very long. Famine is a foe that no army can conquer, and there would be no way open for supplies to reach us.

With Richmond abandoned, what then? Who knows? God only does. But the thought is too appalling to contemplate. I trust it may never have to be evacuated. But the outlook is gloomy enough now. The men feel it. It is in the air. A mist, a semi-darkness hangs over the land. It seems to pervade the atmosphere. Thus it is that our feelings and our fears give color and form to surrounding objects. I will

cease. I would not appall you with evil forebodings, which, after all, happily may never come to pass. God grant that they never may. My faith in the justice of our cause was never stronger. And, ultimately—in some way, at some time, if not now—*the South will prevail.*

Your friend, B.

[In some way, by some route, this letter reached home, and I found it among the rest, when I, too, arrived, about the close of April following. But what shall I here append, by way of note? Nothing, except this: that in two weeks more the misfortune came; Richmond was abandoned; the retrograde began!

For the remainder of the story, therefore, I will assume the narrative form, and cull from memory, and a few notes made soon after the close of the war, the material to finish up these Recollections to the end of the struggle.

Of course, the account must take its coloring, in great measure, from my own personal observation and feelings at the time. Many of my comrades will have other impressions and recollections. We all did not see alike. My notes, made so soon after the return home, reflect the views of the soldier, and I have not sought to give them another cast. Statements that may not be strictly true, I am ready to modify and correct. But my views are my own, and I will abide by them to the end.]

THE SAD FINALE.

The battle of Five Oaks—Lee's flank turned—Richmond abandoned—The city an ocean of flame—Slowly retiring—Without rations—A weary march—Our last fight—Sabbath morning, April 9th—A sound of battle—At Red Oak church—Disbanding—Tears and farewells—Crossing the James.

I come now to the sad finale of the great and bloody drama of war in Virginia. On the 26th of March, Grant's army before Petersburg, having been increased to more than 200,000 men by the arrival of Sheridan with a large cavalry force from the Shenandoah Valley, began to assume the offensive, and, on April 1st, Grant, with this immense and well-equipped army, succeeded in turning General Lee's right flank on the south of Petersburg. A battle ensued, but on the 2d inst., General Lee found it necessary to abandon Petersburg and retire westward, thus leaving that city and Richmond to the mercy of the enemy. With his sadly depleted army, and having no hope of reinforcements from any quarter, it was impossible for Lee any longer to hold his lines and keep the enemy in check. All of General Lee's cavalry forces combined were no match now against the larger and far better equipped cavalry command of Sheridan, and with this strong force at his service, Grant was placed at a great advantage over Lee. Lee's army was far inferior to Grant's in both

number and equipments, and Lee could do nothing more than slowly to retire before the immense host that confronted him.

On Sunday, April 2d, orders reached our Battalion, in its camp on the Nine-mile road, east of Richmond, to withdraw toward the city early on the following morning. The news that Richmond was to be abandoned, though not unexpected, came like a death-knell to us all. The day was a sad Sabbath to the men. We had come to love the city almost as if it had been our home. We passed the day in constant expectation of an attack from the enemy. But no enemy came, and we heard no sound of battle. All remained quiet—the lull before the storm.

Very early on the morning of the 3d of April, our Company, and all other commands near us, hastily packed the wagons with the few essential things that we possessed, and sometime before the dawn of day, we abandoned our last winter quarters, leaving behind such things as were not absolutely essential to take along.

We moved away slowly and quietly, without noise or sound of bugle, expecting an enemy to dash in upon us at any moment, and standing by our guns, ready to give him a warm reception.

Frequent halts were made for other commands to come up or pass by us, or, also to await orders, and our progress was very slow. Thus we had good opportunity to observe all that was taking place around us.

As the different commands left their barracks, or the officers their quarters, fires began to break out on every side, the glare of which cast around a weird, unearthly glamour, like the pall of some impending catastrophe.

As stated in letter forty-fourth, many of the higher officers on this side of the river had obtained quarters in the homes or residences of the citizens—and, in many cases on this memorable occasion, it was private residences, good and comforable homes, that were being consumed. What cause or reason there was for this sacrifice, I never could make out. Nor were there any need that the soldiers' barracks should be destroyed. But such is the temper of man: burn and destroy, lest others possess.

Now and anon, in quick succession, other fires, both right and left of us, would burst forth, until the lurid light of scores of burning camps, or homes, or stores, eclipsed the light of the rising day. All this before we reached the city.

As we approached the environs of the town, great columns of black smoke were seen ascending upward, here and there, all over the city. The Government shops and works everywhere had been fired, and the flames were extending from these to other buildings. It was the ruling order of the hour, to burn everything that had any relation to the Government.

But flames do not pause at Government lines, and soon the angry, hissing fires were raging all along the city, from Rocketts up into the very heart of the town.

Fires were spreading with irresistible fury through the doomed Capital, right and left, for no effort was made to check their advance. On the contrary, more fires were bursting out in other quarters, as if it were the purpose of some fiend to leave the place one pile of ashes and blackened ruins.

Presently, on Union hill, a vivid flash of light shot out and upward, and a great cloud of white smoke burst forth, and spread outward on all sides, followed by a tremendous report that shook the earth around us; and the Confederate Powder Mills had ceased to exist. That, too, had been fired and blown up.

Next, a deafening explosion down at the dock on the James is heard, telling that an iron-clad, upon which so much labor and material had been expended, all to no purpose, had been torn into a thousand shapeless fragments, and hurled hither and thither over the water. And then a second, a third, and a fourth similar explosion indicated that other intended war-craft of the nascent Confederate navy had been rendered non est, without venturing a single fight. What, if some daring Paul Jones could have been found, on that same woeful morning, who would have taken those boats down the river and made a sudden and desperate dash upon the noisy Federal fleet lying there, and so let them have won some renown, before they went down into ruin? The attempt might have furnished a brilliant and interesting chapter in naval warfare.

Explosion after explosion were now succeeding each other rapidly, all along the huge line of flame and

smoke that skirted the river from the Dock to the Basin and beyond. Rapidly upward from Cary to Main the flames were sweeping on, leaping rapidly from tenement to tenement, like hungry fiends from the infernal regions.

All was noise, confusion, excitement, apprehension, fear. Pandemonium reigned supreme within the doomed Capital of the Southern Confederacy, the land of the STARS and BARS. How our hearts sank within us, as we looked upon the appalling scene, the mighty conflagration, the needless sacrifice!

All this time our Company stands idle, irresolute, uncertain, on the hill at the eastern environs—awaiting the tardy orders, that, it seemed, were never coming. Other commands were filing by us without stopping, until at last we are left alone—the rear guard of the retrograde. Still no foe appeared in sight, to push the departing columns faster on. Every man looked on with bleeding heart and bated breath, as the victim lay helpless in the constantly extending fires—but no advancement is made, and the sun is speeding on its course.

At last a courier arrives, and we dash forward, on through Rocketts, where the wildest confusion prevails—on along Main street, where numberless women, reckless of personal danger, are tugging and pulling at parcels and goods thrown out from the depots where supplies had been stored—on by the Government shoe factory, just in time to secure a supply of new shoes—

on toward the Capitol, winding in and out from street to street, to avoid the fast encroaching fires. It is difficult to make our way at all, through the crowds of excited humanity that throng the streets, and hinder travel with their burdens and loads of goods. An officer has to get in front of the Battery with drawn sword to make way for us to pass along.

By this time, an ocean of flame is dashing, as a tidal wave of destruction, from side to side, and roaring, raging, hissing about us, and leaping on from house to house, and from street to street, in very wantonness of wrath. Like a wild, mad steed, without any restraining hand to impede it, the flame bounds along, seeming to gloat in its great power to destroy. As the fire spreads, buildings are deserted, the helpless occupants dragging with them whatever they could of clothes or household goods.

Consternation and confusion prevailed on all sides. No one seemed capable of sober reasoning or calm reflection. The whole city seemed doomed to go down before the onrushing element that roared and raged like fiends and furies. The Government officials, and all in authority, civil or military, seemed to be absent.

Presently we are moved onward toward Mayo's bridge. But, behold! the short bridge spanning the canal before Mayo's is reached, is wrapped in flames, and nothing could pass there. Fortunately, a way is open through the yard of the Danville depot, and over it we dash to the bridge, eager to escape the wilderness

of flame. Just as we were entering the Danville yard, a tobacco factory near by is emptied of its contents of plug tobacco, and the boys got a liberal supply of the weed that served them for a long time after. It was their last gift!

Once safely over Mayo's, we paused awhile, to look upon the scene of danger and dread from which we had just escaped—looked back upon the vast columns of black smoke, rising mountain high, obscuring the sky, and hiding half the town from view. But, even in Manchester, the insatiate flame is busy, and the cotton mills and other works, are rapidly going down before the heartless destroyer. Even here, private residences were on fire, and dismay marked the countenances of men. If a smile lighted the face of any being in Richmond that day, it must have been that of some Stanton or Garrison, gloating over the fall of the Southern Metropolis. No one with a heart could smile with such a spectable of horror before him.

Ah! that was a picture and a time to be remembered forever, and none of the S. L. A. who witnessed it can ever forget the dreadful sight. Miles on miles of fire; mountain piled on mountain of black smoke; million on million of flying sparks, of hot ashes, of angry cinders; one ceaseless babel of human voices, crying, shouting, cursing; one mighty pandemonium of woe, darker than death itself, more to be feared than the angry rush of battle, or the leaden hail and glittering steel of charging columns! Great God! what a deluge

of misery was it. To my last hour, the horrid picture will remain indelibly stamped on memory's tablet. The burning of Richmond on that woeful 3d of April, 1865, was heart-crushing enough to force tears from the most callous eye that ever felt a pang for human sorrow.

And was it necessary? Let the future historian pass upon that. I do not know. But to a private soldier, giving his sober recollections of what he saw and heard, it seemed a cruel and wicked waste—an almost heartless destruction of valuable material and human homes, *that might have been avoided.*

As we gain the turnpike leading out toward Amelia, and pass beyond the confines of the town, we pause to cast back one farewell gaze upon the tragedy we had passed—turned to look our last upon the once queenly Capital of the Confederate States—now Capital no longer, but a fallen, helpless victim! With almost breaking hearts, we turned away, and began our weary tramp hither or thither, as fate might lead.

> "He turned and left the scene—
> O, do not deem him weak—
> Tho' dauntless was the soldier's heart,
> A tear was on his cheek."

So far as we could see and learn, the S. L. A. was the very last organized body of soldiers that left Richmond on that 3d of April, 1865. We came out alone, no other command in sight, either to the front or in the rear of us. We were the fag end of the retiring army

that was slowly, reluctantly wending its way from the place made sacred to the soldier's heart, by the struggles and sufferings of four trying, tragicful years.

Our march was continued all that day, in a slow and orderly manner—on by Coalfield and thence to Tomahawk church, where we paused and rested that night. The next day the march was continued, the several commands proceeding, as yet, upon the same road, and following a general southwesterly direction across a part of Powhatan county, and on into Amelia. Here the forces from Richmond joined in with those from Petersburg, and it was learned that the Federal cavalry were hovering upon our flanks right and left, seeking to fall upon and cut off any part of the retiring column that might become detached from the main body.

But the army was now almost without rations of any description, and, worst misfortune of all, the trains that had been ordered to meet General Lee's army in Amelia with supplies, never came! The order had miscarried or been misunderstood, and the supplies were not at hand! Thus the whole army was practically without food for the remainder of the march, for the section through which we moved had little to give. In addition to the failure of supplies to reach us, as expected, the Federals, on the third day, cut out and burned a large section of the wagon trains that contained some supplies, thereby still further curtailing our means of subsistence.

I think it was at the close of the third day that it became necessary to relieve the battery horses of some of their burden, for they, as well as the men, were suffering from the lack of food, and were jaded from the constant marching. Accordingly, one or two of the cannon of each Battery were dismounted and buried, the wheels of the limbers and caissons were cut down, and so much of the ammunition as could not be carried along was destroyed. Thus lightened of part of their labor, the horses were enabled to hold out to the end. Though foodless, footsore, and sleepy were the men, the march was continued through the fourth day, with no event or incident of importance to relate.

By this time, and before, the army was retiring by several roads leading in a westerly direction, and all the divisions were closely followed by the Federals, and frequent skirmishing occurred between the two armies. An engagement of some magnitude took place at Sailor's Creek, in which the 10th Battalion of Virginia Heavy Artillery, composed largely of men from Surry county, was engaged.

The road travelled by the S. L. A. on this weary march of six days, led us on by Stony Point Mills and Willis Mountain, and thence across a part of Cumberland into Appomattox county. We passed Appomattox Court House about noon on the 8th of April, and proceeding one and a half or two miles further on, paused in a small field to rest; and here we were told, rations would be distributed to the men. The

men of the S. L. A., and I suppose all the other commands from Richmond, had made the march on whatever food they had at the start, and whatever they could pick up from the people along the route. Many of the men kept up in the march two or three days without anything to eat. The army, and especially the S. L. A., was practically foodless for several days, three or four days certainly. Footsore, weary, without sleep, and without food, the boys dragged on, kept up with the guns, and still had the courage and strength left them to hope on and believe that a brighter day would soon come to them. We were approaching near to Lynchburg, and there we expected to find food and rest, and defensive works to fight behind. Up to Saturday afternoon, April 8th, the Artillery of Lee's army, then under command of General Alexander, had not encountered the enemy at any point. Lightfoot's Battalion, and other commands, numbering about 100 pieces in all, were moving together along the same road, and this division of the Artillery was commanded by General Walker, of Southwest Virginia.

Calling to his aid the best local guides of the section, General Walker had led us by obscure roads and by-paths, and across farms, and often by no road at all, either to shorten the way or to avoid the enemy, who was ever hovering upon our flanks, and watchful to strike us unawares. Our progress, however, was necessarily slow all the time. Both men and horses were

thoroughly jaded; halts for rest were frequently made; the roads were hilly and rough; and guides had often to be changed.

It may well be conceived that our six days' tramp was a weary procession. It was akin to a funeral march, a journey to the dead! Indeed, it was a funeral march. We were tramping on to the death-hour of the Confederacy, and every footstep we made was but sounding out the drum-beat to the grave of Southern independence. The men walked on almost in silence. There was no loud or boisterous talk, no songs, no merriment. All hearts were sad, many faces despondent; few hopeful words were spoken. The tattered remnants of General Lee's noble army, that had made for itself a record equal to the best in the history of the world, was under a cloud, and the cloud had no sign of a rainbow promise of deliverance.

It was a hard test of the physical man. Without rest, or food, or sleep, how could men move on continually, and keep their places by the guns? Men slept while walking along. The drivers slept upon their horses. Men would drop down by the wayside and be asleep in a second. Only the strongest and most resolute could keep their places and continue the march.

On Saturday afternoon, after passing the village of Appomattox Court House, we paused for rest in a small clearing, where the artillery and infantry crowded together without order, no one appearing to surmise that any Federals were near us. We had been resting

an hour or more, when suddenly a horseman dashes down, yelling out that the Federals were charging!

For a moment some confusion prevailed. But we stood our ground. The infantry fell into line, our guns were quickly shotted, and just as the Blue Coats burst from the cover of the wood before us, we opened on them, loading and firing as rapidly as we could. The enemy charged up almost to our guns, calling out: "Surrender! surrender!" But we gave them canister and the infantry saluted them so warmly, that they soon retired, with the loss of several of their men.

Fortunately, none of the S. L. A. had received a shot. Perhaps it was because there were so few of us engaged. There was plenty of room for the enemy's missiles to pass without striking a man. The only men whom the writer remembers as serving at the same gun with himself on this occasion, were Corporal T. T. Cockes, gunner, and George C. Holmes, W. Holt Berryman, and, I think, Charles A. Price. Of course, there must have been two or three more men at this gun, and a like number at the other gun—for we had but two cannon then. Two had been left behind, buried somewhere in Amelia county. Altogether, I think there were not more than 20 or 25 men of the S. L. A. engaged in this fight. First Lieutenant W. R. Barham commanded, Captain Hankins having been called to a consultation with some of the superior officers. Many of the men had fallen out of ranks the last day or two, broken down or sick and disabled.

This was our last fight, our last exchange of shots with the foe. Our guns were never shotted again. We had fired our last shell.

During all of that night following this engagement, the artillery, in charge of General Walker, moved slowly and caustiously along in a northerly or northwesterly direction, as if it were his intention to cross over to the northern side of the James river, and so reach Lynchburg that way.

The next day—a Sabbath—dawned bright and beautiful—but it brought nothing beautiful to us. Presently the boom of cannon, in the direction of the army, told us that another battle was about to take place. But the firing soon ceased. We heard afterwards that it proceeded from a part of General Gordon's command, making their last stand for battle.

By this time our Battalion had reached Red Oak church, in Appomattox county, several miles from the place of our engagement of the previous evening. And at noon, a courier arrived, conveying the sad news that General Lee had capitulated, and that the men were to be paroled, and permitted to return to their homes! We were told to park the guns, which was done in the fine grove about the church, and then the men were disbanded—either to surrender to the enemy and get paroles, or to work their way home as best they might. The horses were turned loose that they might graze, and every man who would, took a horse for his own, to help

him along on the way home. Very few of them, however, ever succeeded, I believe, in getting home with one of those horses.

It was here, at this fine old church, that the Surry Light Artillery, and the other Batteries of Colonel Charles Lightfoot's Battalion, fell into fragments. It was here, with tearful eyes, we bid adieu to officers and comrades! Here we looked our last upon our guns, and turned away forever from the battle-flag we had followed. Here the STARS and BARS fell to the ground, no more to float to the breeze. The men broke up into small squads, and turned away from their soldier-life with but one thought uppermost in each heart—HOME. *Let us seek our homes!*

A few of the commissary and supply wagons had succeeded in keeping along with the Batteries, and some of these contained a few articles of uncooked food—a little flour, some sugar, some bacon, perhaps, I am not sure, and—wonderful to say—some coffee! I am sure about the coffee, for when the men were told to take whatever articles they chose from the wagons, I secured a small bag of coffee for myself. I never could account for it how that coffee chanced to escape the pot so long. It had been many a month since any had been issued out to the men. But I had not quite forgot the look of coffee, and that took my eye—and I took it and held it. I have ever been fond of coffee, and if, by chance, anything like a faint smile shone on my face that day, it must have been when I laid hold of

that parcel of Rio or La Guayra—I think it could not have been Java. I trust my former comrades will pardon this personal mention. It was about the only lucky thing—barring the enemy's balls—that had happened for me that week, and I could not resist the temptation to speak of it here.

As I said, any of the men who would have one, took a horse to ride. But most of the men preferred not to be cumbered with a horse. And so the Company broke up into small squads—deeming that the best way to avoid falling into the hands of the enemy—and the several parties started off—some whither, hither and thither, this way or that, as best suited their notion of the proper way to go. Some turned their faces directly homeward, regardless of the fact that 200,000 Federals stood directly in their way. A few, perhaps, tried a more circuitous route by the south. And others believed it would be wiser to cross over the James, and make their way down on the north side, around Richmond, and so on, down the Peninsula. Many took this course.

A company of twelve started out for the James, which was but a few miles away, and, in an hour or two, we succeeded in reaching it at some ferry, the name of which I have forgotten. But it was only a little way above the mouth of Elk river, a small tributary that falls into the James from Appomattox county. On hallooing for the ferry-boat to cross over for us, two negroes promptly started out with the boat, and

when they reached our side, told us that they had been instructed to put across the river any soldiers that might ask for a passage. The promptness of the negroes in answering our call had surprised us a little, and we were a bit suspicious that a trap had been set to capture us. But we passed across safely. In some way, some kind-hearted person had learned of the state of affairs in the army, and so they contributed their mite to aid any paroled or disbanded soldiers to reach their homes. It was a kind and benevolent act, and, I trust, they have, long ago, reaped a bountiful reward.

Thus we were across the James, in Amherst county. Our first object was to obtain food, and then a good, sound sleep—rest and recuperation for the journey homeward.

It is proper, at this point, to remind younger readers of this narrative, that the men of the S. L. A. who stayed by their guns to the end, and were with the command at Red Oak church, *never surrendered.* They were merely disbanded, and told to make their way home as best they could. There was not a Federal in our sight during the whole day of the 9th. There was no one to whom we might turn, to receive us as captives. It would have not been in keeping with the character of Virginians, for us to have voluntarily walked ten miles to General Grant's army, and there to have crossed arms and begged them to fasten on the fetters. None of us thought of doing that. The few of us who were with the guns did not undergo the humiliation of a

surrender; we were not paroled; and some have never assented to "an oath of allegiance."

But, if we escaped this much of the bitterness of defeat, it amounted to nothing in the end. The blow fell with crushing weight upon us all, and it was then very uncertain what fortune awaited us, should we ever succeed in reaching our respective homes in safety. Should we find peace, or would it be vassalage and strife? Would Virginia be ruled as a conquered province, or as a free State, equal with the rest? Would the old soldiers be received as free citizens of a free republic, or would we be disfranchised, reduced to serfdom?

These, and similar thoughts, perplexed us, but we could only go on and trust in God to guide and keep us in the hollow of His hand. One thing we felt we must do, the first thing—we *must* get home somehow, and once there, we would await developments and the trend of the Northern mind toward us. Sleep and rest now—strength for the journey—and then we would turn our faces eastward, like Israel of old, and hasten onward.

Farewell! thou STARS and BARS! Proud banner of a proud people, noble even in their dire defeat! Though thy folds may trail in the dust, and thy foes may deride and scorn thee for ages yet untold! yet—*sometime*—in God's own time, out of the ashes of thy desolation, phœnix-like, thou wilt arise to grander things than at

first. And the sons of thy first followers will seize thee and bear thee aloft, to float again on the breeze, the sacred ensign of a free and *virtuous* people. And under the shadow of thy folds will assemble the poor, the oppressed, the down-trodden, the *Christ-like* of every land and kingdom; and thy influence over them will be Love and Liberty, Peace and Happiness.

"The Flag we carried for four long years—
The Blue, the White, and the Red—
Fondly we fold it and bathe it in tears
For the sake of the gallant dead!"

HOMEWARD BOUND.

Rest and sleep—Starting out—Hospitality of the people by the way—Sheridan's trail of ashes and desolation—Passing Richmond—Down the Chickahominy—Waiting for darkness—Crosing the James—Home at last.

To soldiers who had performed a long and wearisome march of seven days on the very minimum of physical recuperation, the first consideration, on being disbanded, would be food and sleep—rest and strength for the long tramp of more than 200 miles, which now lay between them and their homes. Accordingly, once safely across the river, we procured corn meal and, I think, some bacon, from a family near the way, and seeking a retired and sheltered place among the hills, where we might sleep undisturbed by any passing foe, we proceeded to cook the food, and eat of our frugal meal.

Having partaken of our corn-pone and broiled middling, the first tolerably full dinner we had enjoyed in more than a week, we made nice, soft berths of the forest leaves, and spreading our long-used and tattered blankets, we passed the night of April 9th with nothing to disturb our sleep or dreams, if dreams we had.

It was a lonely woodland glen, shaded by oak and chestnut trees, nestled cozily down amidst the rugged hills of Amherst county, where our little party of seven

passed that first night after the sorrowful close at Appomattox. We slept well, for we greatly needed sleep, but if dreams we had, they must have been, like our hearts, full of sorrow and sadness. Amherst county is a semi-mountainous section, wild and rugged like most other parts of the Piedmont country, a land where nature has been fairly lavish with her splendors; and I opine that many a mountain nook or dell might be found there, wherein some modern Rob Roy might find a safe retreat, and ply his vocation without fear of capture. The artist, the poet, or the novelist, might find there a thousand inspiring subjects for his skill to portray. The very coloring of each landscape seems veiled in the silken fringe of romance; and to one soldier boy present on this occasion, if fond memory had not just then presented to his vision the sacred allurements and tender ties of old Surry, in most bewitching guise, I verily believe he would have been content no further to go, but would have found there a home and resting-place forever.

Early on the morning of the 10th, our little party, refreshed and stronger, turned our faces eastward and set out to measure the footsteps, one by one, that separated us from the "home-place of our hearts." Determined, if we could possibly help it, never to be carried to a Northern prison, it was our aim, by passing through an unfrequented part of the State, to avoid contact with the Federals, and so escape capture. It fell to the writer to act as guide for the party. It is

the experiences of this small squad only that are related in this section. It consisted of Lieutenant W. W. Foreman, George C. Holmes, Bird Harvey, W. Holt Berryman, John A. Davis, Thomas Williams and B. W. Jones.

We found the people along our route to be obliging and hospitable, kindly supplying us with such food as they had to spare, directing us on our way, and giving us shelter at night. But the news of the surrender fell upon them with stunning effect. They had hoped for better things, after all the sacrifices that they had made, and it was with doubt and uncertainty that they looked now upon the future. What would be the post-bellum status to them? We could not tell them. All that we knew was that the conditions of the armistice were liberal.

How fortunate for all of us, then, was it that none could lift the veil that concealed beneath its lurid and slimy folds the horrors, wrongs and humiliations of the decade, now known as the miserable "reconstruction days"—the decade of the carpet-bagger, the renegade, and the "gentleman of color."

By the night of the 10th, we had reached Norwood, in Nelson county, where the kind proprietor gave us a good supper and a comfortable house where to sleep. Norwood is, or was then, a fine place, beautifully located on a mountain ridge, fit haunt for the muses or the literateuer—and the memory of one comfortable night spent there in April, 1865, will long retain its hold upon the writer.

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The next day we reached and crossed Albemarle county, following the towpath of the James River Canal for many miles. This county was the home of the men of Captain Rives's Battery, but we met not a single one of them, though they all might have been safely home by that time.

At Scottsville, in the southeastern corner of that county, we came upon the serpent trail of Sheridan's vandal horde as they came down from the Valley of Virginia in March, 1865, passing by Charlottesville and striking the Canal first at this place. The whole village was one scene of ruin and devastation, private and public property alike having gone down before the devouring flame. Every factory, shop, mill and store was burned, the locks of the Canal dismantled, and the records and books torn and scattered around. The little town lay in its blackened pall like a mourner weeping under the willow trees. It was *thus* they conquered us. Upon Sheridan's gang the shame and infamy of this mode of warfare must rest as a perpetual disgrace upon them. No Veteran can ever forget these things, if he would. Following the line of the Canal from this point to Columbia, and beyond, their work of hate and extermination went on with ruthless hand, destroying mills, fences, locks, bridges, homes, crops, stocks and supplies, without mercy, without shame!

Is it wrong that I should speak of these things here? that I should call up again the mode of the black-handed invaded, who subdued with the torch and flame those

whom he could not conquer in battle? Nay, but I *will speak*—not to stir those olden hates again, but that the future historian may know all the truth—but that the sons may know how the fathers were despoiled and their progenitors impoverished. To these sons we leave thy future, O Virginia!

At Scottsville we took the road by Central Plains to Palmyra and beyond, and tarried for the night with a Rev. Mr. Fox, a Baptist minister, I believe, who received us very kindly, supplied our wants in a most liberal manner, and gave us full directions for the journey the next day. I shall ever remember his kindness to us with gratitude. And if, by any chance, this book should fall into the hands of any person to whom the family is known, I beg them to again express to any survivor thereof, our thanks for the Christian hospitality shown a party of seven ex-Confederates, on the night of April 12, 1865.

The next day we crossed Goochland and entered Hanover county, and passing on, without incident or adventure, by Saturday evening, the 15th, had reached the vicinity of Mechanicsville, a few miles north of Richmond. Knowing, of course, that the Federals were about that place in full force, we passed the night in a sheltered forest, not caring to sleep in any house, lest some one should betray us, and we should be captured, after all.

On the 16th we proceeded on our way around Richmond by the east, passing Mechanicsville in time to

escape a train-load of Federals, and on down by the battlefields of Cold Harbor, and along the country on the eastern side of the Chickahominy, by scenes familiar enough to us, and over ground made famous by the events of war. The traces of war were abundant enough—blackened ruins, earthworks, forests destroyed, bridges, mills and homes burned.

Families were few and far between, but at night we found lodging with a Mr. Christian, an educator, who had taught school at Surry Court House prior to the war. We began to feel like we were getting among home people once more. And I believe our accidental stop there proved a treat to him, inasmuch as it revived his recollections of the people of Surry during his sojourn among them. We felt as if we could almost sniff the Surry air from his place.

Up to the present time our party had remained intact. But on procuring a canoe on the Chickahominy the next morning, two of the boys, George C. Holmes and Thomas Williams, got into it, with the view of descending the stream to Windsor Shade, a mile or two below, where we designed procuring a larger boat, in which the whole party might descend the river.

Windsor Shade, a small hamlet at that time, is at the head of navigation on the river, and from that place up, the stream is a mere swamp, filled with cypress timber. Unfortunately for the two boys in the boat, the stream was found to be so choked with logs and fallen timber, that they could not make their

way down. And after trying some time in vain to do so, and losing precious time, they finally went ashore and continued the walk down to the rendezvous, only to find that the rest of us had departed. Not doubting but they would get along safely and without difficulty, and that they would soon overtake us in their boat (as we designed to proceed slowly until they came up), we had left some time before they arrived.

On this account, and being unable to procure another boat at the place, the boys gave up, and finally proceeded to Richmond and became prisoners. They were sent to Point Lookout, where they found several other men of the S. L. A., but were held some months before being released and sent home. It was the source of much regret to the rest of the party that they should have thus become separated from us. We kept a watch for them all that day and the next, hoping that they would finaly overtake us. But we saw them no more until long months afterward.

Once during that day, we stopped at a house immediately on the river side, where a family resided. But we saw few signs of life, and very few persons anywhere along the river. Our journey down was made with tolerable ease, the boys taking turns at rowing. The country along the river was, at that time, unpromising enough. No signs of labor, or scarcely of human life. Ruins marked the site of many a once pleasant home, and while the river is a large and navigable stream, and the country one of fine possibilities,

at that date, of course, it was deserted and desolate, for there, too, the destroying hand of the Huns and Vandals had been.

As we were on the water, and had only to keep in midstream and row, we deemed it best, at nightfall, to continue on our way, hoping to reach the mouth of the river and cross the James before daylight. But on arriving in sight of the James, we discovered that gunboats were stationed all along the river, about a mile apart, as if they were guarding the stream. It was then too near daybreak for us to venture on the trip across, and as there would be no possibility of crossing by daylight, we concluded to go ashore, and wait for darkness the following night.

It was a long and weary day to us, and we waited and viewed the situation and formed our plans and calculated on the chances of reaching the coveted goal as soon as friendly night should fall again. Only three miles between us and our homeland, but doomed to wait long hours before we might attempt to reach it! Having almost reached the end, having arrived in sight of home, it would never do to fail now. We would be patient and wait.

Concealing our boat, we went ashore and tarried around while the slow-footed hours paced by. Once we ventured up to a farm house and learned that the place was known as Sandy Point. We found only colored people, but these some of the better class of the old

regime. They gave us some bacon and bread, which was our only meal that day, and then we returned, to keep a watchful eye on our boat.

Darkness came at last. Wrapping our oars, to prevent making a noise in the row-locks, we set out to thread our way carefully and silently across the James. The war-ships, with their lights, looked as if they had got nearer together, and we were obliged to pass fearfully near to one of them. But we kept on, making all the speed we could.

And, at last, our little craft grated upon the sands of old Surry shore! and all the gunboats on the James could not have stayed us then! The hearts of five ex-Confederates beat lighter and freer than they had done for many a day before. We were on our native soil, and a single day more would bear each of us to our respective homes.

But we were yet too far up the river, and had still to work our way as cautiously as we could around the long point known as Swan's Point Bar, before we could reach Cobham landing, the place where we designed going ashore.

Billy Holt, who knew the river well, was our pilot, and, in due time, and without mishap, we reached the landing place, and our feet pressed the friendly soil of our native heath again!

Does any one suppose that gratitude to Almighty God did not swell within our hearts, for our delivery from all the dangers of the way? for leading us safely

on to the end? Nay, but we could have knelt and kissed the soil at our feet, in very thankfulness of heart. After the many sad events and dangers of the past month—yea, of the past four years—forgetting all our long marches, toils, privations, sufferings and changes that we had experienced, we devoutly thanked the God of heaven that we had arrived safely at home again—adored His holy name that we had escaped capture, wounds, death—had been preserved through all the dangers incident to war, and were favored to stand again upon our native soil. Truly could we say:

"Through many dangers, toils and pains
Our weary feet have come;
'Twas Grace that guarded all the way,
And Grace that led us home"

This was Tuesday night, April 18th, 1865, just nine days from Appomattox, having tramped more than 200 miles in about eight days, as we tarried all of 18th at Sandy Point, in Charles City county.

But where are all of our late companions and comrades in arms? those men from whom we parted nine days ago? Have any of them arrived at home? No. All of them have surrendered. Some are held at Petersburg or at City Point; some are on their way by different routes homeward; and others have been sent on to Point Lookout, or Fortress Monroe, to suffer the humiliating experiences of imprisonment for many long

weeks. It was this that we feared and that made us so resolved to thread our way homeward without falling into the hands of the foe, and thus of being delayed indefinitely, until it might suit the convenience of the Federals to permit us to proceed onward. Our party is the first to reach home—the longer distance, but the shortest trip. And we have had no experience with Yankee blackguard or negro insolence! This alone is worth all the pains the longer way has cost us.

But alas! alas! how different is the result from what we fondly hoped it would be! from that for which we fought and believed would be! The Southern Confederacy lies prostrate at the feet of her despoilers. They wore us out by attrition and the torch. What a gloom, a foreboding, a sadness, rests over the land! Who can tell, as yet, but that a worse disaster than defeat awaits us. Shadows seem to lower everywhere. All is despondency, apprehension, fear. There is no life, but a stupor, a dazed unrest, a silent looking about for even a trace of the silver lining on the dark cloud.

Silver lining? Is there any—*can* there be any to such a storm-burst as this? How will the Federals regard us in the coming years? We can only await and see what the future will bring, whether *magnanimity* or *oppression*.

Such were the thoughts that came to us, half spoken, half unuttered, as, on the next day, we stood awhile

together on the Court House green, ere we separated to seek our respective homes.

"God rules. We will trust Him," whispers one to the rest. And with this comforting hope animating us, we clasp hands and part.

And here ends my Recollections of the war. I have told the story of the Surry Light Artillery as I remember it. I believe that my comrades who yet survive will find that it is a truthful and, in the main, a pretty full account of the scenes, events and dangers through which we passed during those memorable years in which the Southern States were engaged in a desperate struggle for their separate independence. I have aimed to emphasize the right of a free people, to resist with arms and to the death, the invasion of their native land. I have sought to put on record just what the men of Surry and the surrounding counties fought for—that *it was not,* as many seem yet to suppose, to perpetuate the institution of negro slavery, but *it was* to maintain the *sovereign liberty,* the *supreme authority* of each separate State to govern and control its own domestic affairs according to the will of its own free citizens.

State Rights according to the copy of the old Constitution, and personal liberty as guaranteed by that document, were the issues involved in that war.

And when Virginia, in the exercise of her sovereign right, withdrew from the Union on April 17, 1861; and

when, shortly afterward, at various points, an armed soldiery crossed the borders of the State, with the expressed purpose of *coercing* her people into submission to Northern tyranny—*then* the men of Surry saw it was time to confront the invaders of their State with arms in their hands, and fight for their homes and their altars.

Were they wrong? What though the issue of the contest went against them, and they failed for the time being? While right is right, and truth is truth, the principle remains inviolable. To the calmer judgment of posterity I will appeal for the justice of our course.

'Tis well that War's hot bolts soon speed—
That Mercy's hand its wrath will screen,
And haste to hide the hearts that bleed
Beneath the olive branch of green.

THE SHADOW ON THE WALL.

"Coming events cast their shadows before them."

The following account of his experiences with a portion of the wagon trains, on the retrograde from Richmond, written by our comrade, Sergeant S. M. Williams, presents a graphic picture of things that occurred on a different road from that over which the artillery passed. It is interesting as showing that, while the supply trains are an essential part of the service, yet an army may be greatly encumbered and hindred by its own baggage.

But these reminiscences reveal another, and very significant phase, for which I was not prepared at so early a stage in our post-bellum history. They show how the hand of the freebooter and petty pilferer, the low sneak and cowardly robber, had already begun that despicable trade that became so common and widespread over the South during the first decade just after the close of the war. These detestable hangers-on and camp-followers must have been pretty numerous in the Northern armies. Here, not three days after the close of hostility, we find the type and forerunners of that large class of sharks, robbers, thieves, oppressors and insulters that grew into such an army of despoilers and

vampires during the next ten years. They were the avant couriers of the carpetbagger and his allies, that figured so largely in politics a few years later.

But, in fact, there is good reason to believe that these thugs and thieves had been constant attendants of the Federal armies everywhere, from the first outbreak of the war. They attended the armies in order to rob and pillage the people along the line of march. And while the torch of the invader was busy, the hand of these thugs was busier still.

Between the torch of the invader and the robberies of that caravan of carrion crows that swooped down on the South during the days of military misrule and political oppression, is it any wonder that our people became impoverished almost beyond the hope of recovery? Indeed the wonder is that anything was left upon which to build anew the material prosperity of the land.

The robbers that were following Grant's army at first soon became bold enough to spread out over the country in small gangs, to seize upon whatever of value that they could find.

And so these reminiscences of Sergeant Williams reveal "the shadow on the wall," the hand of the despoilers of the South, that has been so vividly delineated by the masterly pen of Thomas Dixon and others. It is out of our province to go further in this painful story. It was only that my readers should not fail to notice this significant point in this paper of my comrade, that I have said this much about it.

REMINISCENCES

Of S. M. Williams, Quartermaster-Sergeant of the Surry Light Artillery, on the march from Richmond to Appomattox, April, 1865.

Breaking camp on the Nine-mile road, below Richmond, April 3d, 1865, we started for Amelia Court House. Passing over a part of Powhatan county without interruption by any hostilities, we had no sooner crossed the Appomattox into Amelia, than a general stampede to the rear began, it being reported that the enemy was in our front. Soon the march was resumed when, suddenly, sharp fighting began on our left but a little way off. The firing did not continue long, but on resuming our march, and coming to another road, we found the way filled with army wagons as far as we could see. Not desiring to wait for the whole train to pass us before we joined in the line, I instructed the drivers to keep close together and lay on whip and force their way into the line, regardless of consequences. This they did, and we succeeded in getting in, leaving the man that we had headed off very furious and uttering a lot of things that I am sure he never learned from his Sunday-school lessons.

Continuing, our march led us by the way of Farmville, near which place we camped for the night. Next morning Major Gary gave me some bacon for the Company, and told me that General Gary could tell

me where to find the Company. But on applying to General Gary for the information, he was not able to give it.

By the time I had returned to the wagons, a battle began near us, and we got the wagon train off as quickly as possible. On the evening before the surrender, we stopped for a rest. But soon Major Maulding instructed the drivers to hitch the team with as little noise as possible, and told me that we were surrounded, but we would make our escape if we could.

We moved off a little way, and then turned about and went about the same distance in another disrection. And so we continued, turning and going all night. But, behold! at sunrise we had not even gotten into the proper road. We had been going in a circle all night.

This was Sunday morning, April 9th, and in a short time we were informed that General Lee had capitulated. We remained at the same place until Wednesday morning, when we got our paroles, signed by Dr. J. B. Coakley, and started for home. On our way to Farmville, we noticed three men following us, and soon they passed us and were out of sight. But in a short time we again saw them coming up from the rear, as before. By this we were convinced that they meant no good. Soon they passed by once more.

In Farmville, while conversing with a Union soldier, another came up and made some derogatory remarks about us. But the first man told him that we were paroled prisoners, and no one but a scoundrel would

attempt to insult us. The other then moved off, and our friend remarked that there were many such fellows in the army, but they were of no account, and only a disgrace to it.

At Burkeville I went to the Provost Marshal to get rations for my squad. I found him in a wrangle with a citizen, and waited awhile for him to cool off. On approaching him, he at once gave me an order for the rations, and informed me where to find the Commissary.

While at the provision department, the officer in charge came up and began to converse with me. At last he inquired, "Where will you camp to-night?" I told him I did not know, but we wished to get as far toward home as we could. He said that was right, but when we stopped, to go well away from the road, so that our fire would not be seen by any one travelling the road. And added that there were robbers following the army, and if they found us, we would be robbed, and perhaps killed.

We travelled late and then went in camp for the night, and rested without interruption until morning. The next day, in the afternoon, we reached our homes, thus ending our military career.

S. M. Williams.

I do not recall the names of all the men of our Company that were with me. Thomas H. Tynes and R. M. J. Collier were the drivers. And I think George W. Moody and William J. Presson were two. John Underwood came to us on the morning of the surrender.

S. M. W.

EXPERIENCES

Of Dr. Joseph N. Jones, of Surry, while a prisoner of war.

The following notes, written by Dr. Joseph N. Jones, of Surry county, relating his arrest in Isle of Wight county, and his imprisonment, first at Bermuda Hundred, and subsequently at Fortress Monroe and Point Lookout, having come into my hands, and believing that Doctor Jones would sanction their publication, were he living, I have inserted them here.

Doctor Jones was well known to many of the citizens of Surry and Isle of Wight, as a gentleman after the highest type of the old regime, and these notes, while written with no view, perhaps, to subsequent publication, were doubtless intended for preservation. They were inscribed upon the blank leaves of a Bible, as if he designed them to escape oblivion. Presenting, as they do, a vivid picture of the boorish insolence of many among the subalterns in the Federal service, and as showing something of the petty tyrannies that Southern prisoners had to endure, the paper forms an interesting chapter in the history of the prison service of the war.

As the men of the S. L. A. had a considerable acquaintance with Butler's command, while he reigned at Bermuda, this account of the treatment that Doctor Jones received at his headquarters will be doubly interesting to them:

"On the 17th of August, 1864, about daybreak, I was arrested at the residence of Mr. John M. Cawson, in Isle of Wight county, together with himself and his son, John, by a squad of Yankees from a gunboat commanded by a Captain Fitch. At the same time, they captured some Confederate scouts stationed in the neighborhood, Nat. Gammel, James Curry and George Davis. The latter they wounded in the leg, and he subsequently died of his wound.

We were taken to the headquarters of General B. F. Butler, near Bermuda Hundred, where I remained until the first of October, in the hands of Lieutenant H. H. Davenport, Provost Marshal. Whilst there I was obliged to live in a most filthy condition, had no change of clothing—and, worse than all, was subject to many indignities from that comtemptible tool of General Butler, the said Davenport. He took the greatest delight in the abuse of prisoners under his charge, a sure characteristic of the poltroon, too cowardly to face a chivalrous foe in honorable combat. He was a good specimen of the New England pseudo puritan, a comtemptible, mean, cowardly, petty tyrant. Neither was youth or age a protection against the malevolence of this dastard wretch.

From Bermuda Hundred I was transferred to Camp Hamilton, a Yankee Bastile near Fortress Monroe—with other Confederates, among Yankee animals and negroes—the latter much the more decent.

Here I was treated kindly by the officer in command, and particularly by Captain Blake, of Pennsylvania,

Captain of the Guard. On the 15th of October I was transferred to the military prison at Point Lookout. Dr. John Thompson, Post Surgeon, gave me, on the day of my arrival, the position of surgeon in the prison hospital, Ward No. 8, which I held during the remainder of my imprisonment. Here I was treated with kindness and respect, both by Federals and Confederates, the latter numbering, at one time, more than twenty thousand men. I hope I was of some little service in relieving the sufferings of my fellow-prisoners. About eight thousand of them died at this prison during the war.

The officers of this prison were generally kind to the prisoners, but they were treated badly by the negro guard placed over them. Several prisoners were shot by them, some killed, without the slightest provocation. And, so far as I know, none of them were ever punished for it.

Major Brady, Provost Marshal, was regarded as good-natured. He was kind in his manner to the prisoners. Captain Barnes, his assistant, was kind and courteous. Doctor Thompson had all the instincts of a gentleman, was polite to all, but was as cold and frigid as the bleak hills of his New England home.

The most pleasant episode in my prison life was, when looking about for a friend to assist me, after my arrival at Point Lookout, I received very unexpectedly a most kind note from a lady I had never seen or heard of, Miss Lou F. Whiting, of Hampton, Va., prof-

fering assistance, commencing a correspondence which continued for some time. Her letters solaced me very much.

On the 2d of June, 1865, I was released from prison, and on the evening of the 3d arrived at the home of my old friend, George H. Crump, near Chuckatuck. I was accompanied by Dr. Samuel Wilson, of Surry.

J. N. Jones.

REPORT

Of Pembrook D. Gwaltney, a member of the Surry Light Artillery, detailed as Master Armorer, for the 2d Corps, Army of Northern Virginia.

"I joined the S. L. A. sometime in July, 1862, before the Sharpsburg fight. After that I was detailed, by order of Colonel Baldwin, Chief of Ordnance, Army of Northern Virginia, and ordered to Winchester, Va., to establish a repair shop there. When I reached Winchester, I found that our army had re-crossed the Potomac, and that the Federal army was marching towards Winchester, and I remained there only two or three weeks.

"I was then ordered to Staunton, and established a shop there for the repair of arms, and remained there two or three months. Was then ordered to Hanover Junction, under the command of Colonel William Allen, Chief of Ordnance of the 2d Corps, and established a shop at Hanover Junction, which did repairs for the army lying around Fredericksburg. From that place I was transferred to Guinea Station, and was there when the battle of Chancellorsville was fought. I remained at Guinea Station until the 2d Corps was moved, and I continued with the Second Corps, under Colonel William Allen, until the battle of Waynesboro,

when General Early's army was dispersed or captured. I then made my way to Richmond, and rejoined the S. L. A., and started with it to Appomattox. Afterwards, when Colonel Lightfoot refused to surrender, I was captured and sent to Newport News. Was released on July 2d, 1865, and reached my home July 4th, not having seen any member of my family for more than two and a half years.

"P. D. GWALTNEY."

Smithfield, Va.

OUR DEAD.

The following is a list of our comrades who died during the progress of the war, either of sickness or of wounds received in battle:

Whitfield Goodrich, of pneumonia, at Camp Pemberton, March 10, 1862. Thomas J. Rowell, of congestive chill, at Benn's church, May, 1862. Josiah Bell, Ira O. Crenshaw, Edward L. Collier, Robert A. Collier, John W. Edwards, Anson Goodrich, at hospital in Petersburg, June-July, 1862. Richard Moring, in Camp near Walthall Junction, July, 1862. John W. Presson, at home, in 1863. Samuel A. Moody, at home, 1863. J. Thomas Brown, of small-pox, at hospital in Richmond, in 1864. Josiah Gwaltney, July, 1864. Zachariah Holland, June, 1864. James Pond, July, 1864. Edward W. Wright, July, 1864. John A. Deal, killed at Upperville, 1863. Total, 17.

The following members have died since the close of the war:

Archibald R. Atkins, at his home, in Isle of Wight, in 1897. William T. Atkins, Isle of Wight, 1894 or '95. Henry Ambros, time and place not known.

James T. Bailey, at his home in Surry, August 13, 1903. Joseph W. Bailey, home in Surry, June 17, 1906. Calvin Baker, home in Isle of Wight, May 4, 1905. James Baker, home in Isle of Wight, about 1866. William R. Barham, home in Norfolk, May 17, 1908. John W. Barlow, home in Isle of Wight, in 1898. William O. Barlow, home in Isle of Wight, November 5, 1906. Decatur Barlow, home in Isle of Wight, 1894. T. Bolling Bell, home in Isle of Wight, February 26, 1904. Edwin R. Bell, home in Isle of Wight, December, 1905. William Joe Bell, Surry, about 1867 or '68. Samuel D. Bell, Norfolk, February 19, 1908. George A. Bell, Surry, 1866 or '67. J. Nicholas Bell, Surry, soon after the war. Theophilus J. Berryman, time and place not known. John R. Berryman, Surry, about 1867. A. Nicholas Brown, Surry, soon after the war. Frank N. Carrington, Charlotte county, about 1874. Roger Casey, home in Surry, 1866. Thomas T. Cockes, Surry, December, 23, 1902. Abner B. Cofer, home in Surry, soon after the war. William A. Clayton, Surry, 1866. William Crocker, Isle of Wight, soon after the war. R. M. J. Collier, Surry, 1898. John A. Davis, Surry, soon after the war. George W. Dean, Isle of Wight, soon after the war. Hezekiah Delk, in Surry, February, 1899. James T. Deuel, home in Surry, soon after after war. W. W. Foreman, home in San Angelo, Texas, April 30, 1902. James Gay, Surry, soon after the war. Milton H. Gray, Isle of Wight, about 1867. Joseph Garon,

time and place unknown. Jos. Glover, Surry, soon after the war. Lewis Glover, Surry, a few years after the war. Benjamin F. Gwaltney, home in Surry, about 1892 or '93. John A. Gwaltney, home in Surry, May 14, 1904. James D. Hankins, killed in the spring of 1866. James Hatchell, Surry, about 1872 or '73. J. Thomas Harris, Surry, a few years after the war. John T. Harris, Surry, shortly after the war. George M. Hargrave, home in Surry, about 1893 or '94. Richard A. Hargrave, home in Southampton, March, 1898. Bird Harvey, in Petersburg, date not known. Edmund S. Holleman, at Chapoax, Surry, about 1873. George C. Holmes, home in Southampton, October 29, 1907. William S. Johnson, Surry, shortly after the war. Randolph Johnson, Surry, shortly after the war. Bolling T. Jones, home in Surry, February 9, 1908. Isaac G. Jones, Surry, March 11, 1893. Wiley Jones, Nansemond, soon after the war. Robert H. Jones, home in Surry, July 22, 1880. John L. Judkins, Weldon, N. C., October 2, 1905. James Judkins, Surry, a few years after the war. Julian Judkins, Isle of Wight, shortly after the war. R. P. Q. Judkins, Surry, several years after the war. James King and Joseph King, Surry, time unknown. Joseph R. Kea, Isle of Wight, shortly after the war. John R. Kea, home in Surry, soon after the war. Luther J. Little, home in Sussex, about 1894. William E. Long, time and place unknown. William J. Lewis, home in Nansemond, shortly after the war. Thomas H. Mitchell, Surry,

time not known. Christopher Mitchell, Surry, date uncertain. William B. Moore, Surry, 1867 or '68. William H. Oliver, time and place not known. Henry Peters, Baltimore, June, 1902. Joseph Pitman, Surry, about 1866. Noah B. Pond, home in Surry, shortly after the war. William J. Presson, Isle of Wight, January, 1901. Joel J. Presson, home in Southampton, April 25, 1906. Charles A. Price, Surry, about 1890. Asa Rogers, Surry, several years after the war. Gilbert W. Rogers, Isle of Wight, June 11, 1907. Henry W. Rogers, Surry, June 12, 1907. J. Henry Rowell, Surry, soon after the war. Thomas W. Ruffin, time and place uncertain. John Ruffin, time and place uncertain. Mallory Shields, Hampton, Va., shortly after the war. James N. Spratley, Surry, soon after the war. Julian A. Stuart, home in Surry, March 19, 1903. Benton D. Thomas, home in Norfolk, April 13, 1907. Lewis L. Turner, Southampton, July, 1900. W. Henry Turner, Isle of Wight, time uncertain. James T. Turner, Isle of Wight, time uncertain. Thomas H. Tynes, home in Surry, July 17, 1900. John Underwood, Surry, shortly after the war. James S. Warren, home in Surry, a few years after the war. Samuel D. Warren, Surry, a few years after the war. Joel J. Whitley, home in Newport News, April 14, 1898. Linnæus W. White, Surry, several years after the war. Thomas H. Williams, Prince George county, shortly after the war. Thomas Williams, Surry, shortly after the war. Total, 96.

Besides these, it is uncertain whether the following are living or dead:

George W. Armistead, Alexander Baker, W. John Edwards, John P. Goodson, Beverly W. Irving, Marion Messersmith, James C. Underwood, George Waggoner, ——— Wynn. Total, 9.

"The grave's grim halls are never full—
Death's harvest never ends!
And fast the few survivors turn,
To greet their former friends."

LIST OF SURVIVORS.

The following members of the S. L. A. were known to be living at the time of our last reunion, August 13, 1908:

James S. Avery, Joseph H. Barham, Junius H. Barlow, John H. Bell, Jacob E. Bell, William T. Bell, Joseph R. Berryman, W. Holt Berryman, Fielding A. Coakley, Littleton M. Cockes, Peter F. Crocker, Matthew A. Delk, B. Hardy Delk, Thomas N. Edwards, J. Decatur Edwards, Edward E. Edwards, Junius Ellis, W. H. Elliott, R. Fuller Farrar, Junius Gray, P. D. Gwaltney, John Hankins, William E. Harris, William E. James, Robert James, Thomas A. James, B. W. Jones, B. O. Judkins, James T. Latimer, William H. Little, J. Thomas Little, James M. Lewis, James W. Moody, George W. Moody, E. H. McGuriman, William R. Mathews, James N. Mathews, John T. Nelms, Joseph T. Price, John F. Ramsey, Charles C. Richardson, Henry C. Roberts, George A. Rowell, P. H. Rowell, R. R. Savedge, C. Travis Savedge, George A. Savedge, James T. Savedge, John L. Seward, Frank R. Seward, John F. Scott, Edwin S. Spratley, Robert C. Thompson, James M. Turner, Serveitus M. Williams. Total, 54. Of these, George A. Rowell died May 20, 1909, and E. H. McGuriman, June 4, 1909.

Of the original Company of 54 men, who went out from Surry Court House June 22, 1861, only the following are now living:

John H. Bell, Joseph R. Berryman, Littleton M. Cockes, B. H. Delk, William E. James, B. W. Jones, W. H. Little, James W. Moody, H. C. Roberts, P. H. Rowell, R. R. Savedge, E. S. Spratley, John L. Seward, R. C. Thompson. Total, 14.

"A thin and broken rank, we stand,
With mute and bodeful gaze;
While few and feebler grows the band
So strong in other days.

"How Friendship's eye, by silent walls,
Turns back in tearful mood,
To find, alas! deserted halls
Where once our comrades stood."

And now, nothing more remains to be said, except to crave the indulgence of my readers for the many defects of style, and possible inaccuracies, that, I fear, are but too evident in the course of this simple recital of what one Company of soldiers did and endured in the war between the States. Had I tarried until I could have written a perfect history, the book would never have seen the light.

I feel, too, that I should thank, in some befitting terms, those of my comrades who have enabled me to print the book at all. It was only by the earnest and untiring efforts of a few among them that the work has been pushed to completion. Foremost among these

were my friends and comrades, Joseph H. Barham and Charles C. Richardson, to whose active and untiring efforts I am greatly indebted. And to all others, in and out of the Company, my warm thanks are hereby tendered for the generous aid and encouragement so kindly extended. I would fain name them all.

Here, then, I lay the pen aside, to await what reception may be accorded the simple story I have essayed to tell. The history of the Surry Artillery as a military organization, ends, of course, with the close of the war in Virginia. From that time its broken fragments, scattered to their respective homes over a large part of the State, seldom saw or heard of each other, and soon became almost as strangers again. Many, in fact, the greater part, have never met since that direful, inglorious day.

But the few survivors, true to the friendships born of the trials, sufferings and tears of those four undying years, will not cease to keep green the names and deeds of each one. While a single one of them lingers here, the immortelle and cypress shall flourish by the fallen, and over each new-made grave we will inscribe the hopeful prayer:

"Sit tibi terra levis."

The End.

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